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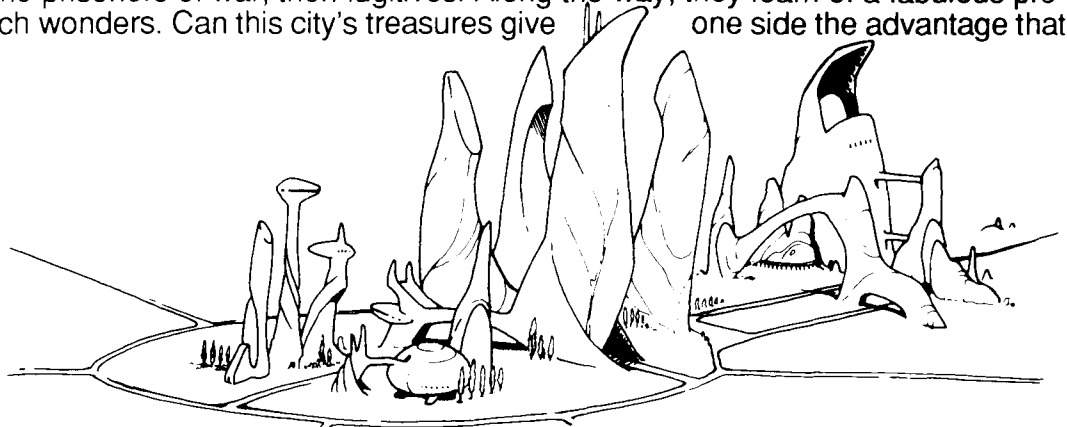
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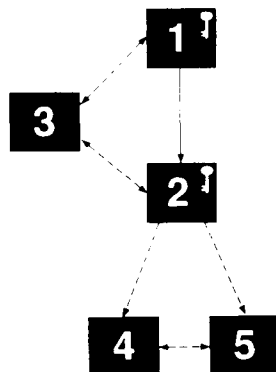
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# VOYAGES SF

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## WELCOME ABOARD

When GDW released the *MegaTraveller* edition of the *Traveller* rules, I wondered if official support would continue in the way of adventures maintaining the original timeline of *Traveller* (continuing on from 1111, after the close of the Fifth Frontier War rather than jumping forward to 1117 and *MegaTraveller's* civil war). There was a lot of talk within fan circles about the prospect, but obviously it wasn't forthcoming, which is unfortunate for those who wanted to continue on with existing campaigns from 1111. The article in this issue entitled "Support Your Local Police," is a *Traveller* adventure. I was a unsure whether it would be justifiable to print it. However, not only did I find it enjoyable to read, I found that that it could easily be adapted for use on a recently war-ravaged planet in the time of the Imperium's civil war. I hope all you *Traveller* fans enjoy it, regardless of which *Traveller* edition you're using.

This is the last issue that you will see Reader Survey results for the previous issue. While it is kind of fun to see what our readers think of each article and does give us an indicator of what readers want and don't want, reader participation has dropped significantly. We don't feel that the response merits its continuation.

- James B. King

### Voyages SF 15 Survey Results

The Bunker Hill Class Cruiser .....	3.3
Graphics & Illustration .....	3.3
Linkup .....	3.3
An Obvious and Current Menace .....	3.2
CommLink .....	3.0
Words To Game By .....	3.0
The Hunt for Patrick Hersh .....	2.7
Reviews .....	2.5
Helicopter Rules for BattleTech .....	2.3
(Typical Laser Pistols overlooked on survey)	

Q1: Is this issue better than, as good as, or not as good as our last issue? 67% better than, 33%-as good as

Q2: Including yourself, how many people read this issue? 2

Q3: Rating in order of preference the most recent issues of the gaming magazines you read, where would you rate this issue of Voyages SF (1 is high)? 2

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A Star Wars cross-over adventure involving plucky aliens from another SF RPG! *Craig Sheeley*

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# commmlink

Publishers desiring more informative write-ups of their releases should send advance announcements and/or product samples.

Question mark indicates release date unknown. Parentheses indicate intended release date. Dates not in parentheses indicate item available at preparation of this column.

## Avalon Hill

Tales of the Floating Vagabond RPG, \$14, Aug  
Bar Wars, \$13, Nov

## B. T. R. C.

Warpworld RPG, \$21.95, Aug  
The Day After, \$12.95 (Jan)

**3G3:** The 3rd edition expansion and revision of the **Guns!, guns!, guns!** weapon design system. In addition to a new format, the rules have been expanded to cover melee weapon design, and have complete (unofficial) conversion guidelines for **Timelords**, **CORPS**, **Hero System**, **GURPS**, **Cyberpunk 2020**, **Torg**, **MegaTraveller**, & **Twilight: 2000**. \$12.95, Dec.

**TimeLords: Supertanker of Death.** A 3-part adventure set in a near-alternate near future, which pits the characters against unnatural creatures large and small, a crippled TimeLord and economically motivated terrorists whose plane went a bit too far. \$6.95, Dec.

Time Capsules #2, \$8.95, (Jan)

**CORPS: Deathwind.** A thoroughly nasty 5-part adventure which will take approx. a game year to complete, involving gold conspiracies, modern technology, lost memories, the Hierarchy, Illuminati and more. Designed to keep paranoid characters on their toes, and have the cleverest ones scratching their heads trying to put all the pieces together. Includes background history of the Hierarchy for GM reference. \$9.95, Dec.

Organizations Book #1, \$5.95 (Jan)

Worldbook 1992, \$9.95 (Jan)

## Chaosium

**Call of Cthulhu:** Fearful Passages, \$18.95 (Jan)  
Kingsport, \$18.95, Oct  
Cthulhu Now (2nd ed.), \$19.95, ?

## Creative Encounters

Reichstar: Iron Eagle Patch, \$5 (Jan)

## Digest Group Pub.

**MegaTraveller:** Alien Races: Solomani and Asian, \$12.95, Nov  
The Best of the Travellers' Digest, \$12.95 (Dec)  
A.I. RPG, \$29.95 (Dec)

## FASA

**BattleTech:** Equipment & Vehicles Guide, \$12 (Dec)  
**AeroTech** (reprint) \$15 (Dec)  
Reinforcements II, \$15 (Dec)  
Objective Raids, \$15 (Jan)  
CityTech (reprint), \$20, ?  
Falcon Guard (novel) \$4, Nov  
**Shadowrun:** The Rigger Black Book, \$15, ?  
Total Eclipse, \$8, Oct  
2XS (novel), \$4.50 (Jan)  
Elven Fire, \$8 (Jan)

## Flying Buffalo

**MSPE:** Mug Shots 2, \$8.95 (Dec)

## GDW

**Twilight/Merc: 2000:** Heavy Weapons of the World, \$12 (Jan)  
Gazeteer Svcbk, \$14, Dec  
Twilight Nightmares, \$12, Oct  
**Dark Conspiracy:** Ascending Evil (novel), \$4.95 (Dec)  
Hellsgate, \$10 (Jan)

## Game Masters Intl.

**Interstellar Elite Combat: Arctic Combat.** Bone-chilling adventure awaits you in Dome #9, a place where temperatures hover somewhere between freezing water and absolute zero. Your enemy is two-fold; you must survive combat against trained warriors, and you must beat the death dealing elements in this frozen wasteland of a glacial hell. \$12.95 (Jan)

## Grenadier

**Cyberpunk:** Cyberpunk Characters miniatures, \$11.95, Oct

## Iron Crown Enterprises

**SpaceMaster:** Aliens & Artifacts, \$14, Oct  
Outlaw Svcbk, \$18, Oct

## Marquee Press

**Eidolon:** Adventures in the Afterlife RPG, \$12.95 (Jan)

## Mayfair Games

**Chill:** Apparitions, \$12, Nov  
Chilled to the Bone anthology, \$9.95, Nov  
North America Svcbk, \$12, ?  
CyberChill, \$12, ?  
**D.C. Heroes:** World at War, \$12 (Jan)

## Palladium Books

**Rifts Conversion Book:** Filled with valuable conversion data, monsters, demons, and other good stuff. 224 pages. \$19.95, Dec.

**Villains Unlimited:** A sourcebook and adventure companion for **Heroes Unlimited**. Cover painting by James Steranko, with interior art by Kevin Long, Siembieda, and Gustovich. Villains, villainous organizations, new super-powers and adventures will fill this 200+ page book. \$19.95.

**Mutants in Orbit:** A combination sourcebook for **Rifts** and **TMNT/After the bomb**. The Rifts section will explore what mysteries and life forms exist in orbit around Earth and on the moon. The book will be 112 to 160 pages, priced at \$11.95 to \$14.95.

## R. Talsorian

**Mekton:** Mekton Field Manual, \$12, ?  
**Cyberpunk 2020:** Night City Stories (Atlas), \$15 (Jan)  
Arasaka Brainworm (Atlas), \$7.95, Oct  
Corporation Report 2020, \$10, Nov  
Corporation Report 2020 #2, \$10 (Jan)  
EuroTour '21, \$10, ?  
Tales From the Forlorn Hope, \$10, ?  
Near Orbit (reprint), \$10, ?

## Seeker Gaming Systems

Futuristic Corporation Building Plans (25mm), \$12.95, Oct  
Research Facility (25mm), \$12.95, ?

## Seventh Street Games

**Mecha RPG:** Spirit Warrior Empire, \$9.95, Dec



From Palladium Books' Villains Unlimited

## StarChilde Pub.

**Justifiers:** Hybrid Svcbk, \$8.95, Dec  
Aborigine Svcbk, \$8.95, Dec  
Aries on the Rocks, \$7.95 (Jan)  
**Guardians:** Power Corps Adventure Companion, \$4.95, ?  
**Monsters:** Planes, Trains & Other Appetizers, \$8.95 (Jan)

## Stellar Games

**Nightlife:** In a Musical Vein, \$12.95, Jul  
Ref Screen & Accessories, \$12.95, ?  
**Late Show:** The Movie Screen, \$7.95, ?  
**Afterwars:** After Dark America Svcbk, \$12.95, ?  
KinRise, \$14.95 (Jan)

## Steve Jackson Games

Star Fist sci-fi boardgame, \$19.95, Dec  
**Car Wars:** Uncle Al's Catalog From Hell, \$19.95 (Jan)  
**Illuminati:** Membership Kit, \$14.95, Oct  
**GURPS:** Reference Screen, \$8.95, Sep  
Space Atlas #4, \$16.95, Sep  
Martial Arts (reprint) \$14.95, Oct  
Space Adventures, \$16.95, Oct  
Aces Abroad (Wild Cards), \$16.95, Nov

## Sutton Hoo Games

Princess Ryan's space Marines, \$30, Nov

## Task Force Games

**Starfleet Battles:** Fighters: Module J, \$19.95, Dec  
Fast Patrol Ships: Module K, \$19.95, ?  
Frax: Module P1, \$5, Oct  
X-Ships: Module P2, \$5, Oct  
Veterans's Master Ship Chart, \$5, Oct

## Timeline LTD

**Morrow Project:** The Final Watch, \$7.95, Oct

## TSR

**Marvel Superheroes:** Gamers Guide Update '91, \$15.95, Dec  
Handbook #1 (reprint), \$18, Oct  
Handbook #2 (reprint), \$18, Oct  
Stygian Knights, \$6.95, Dec  
**Buck Rogers:** The Belt Accessory, \$9.95, Nov

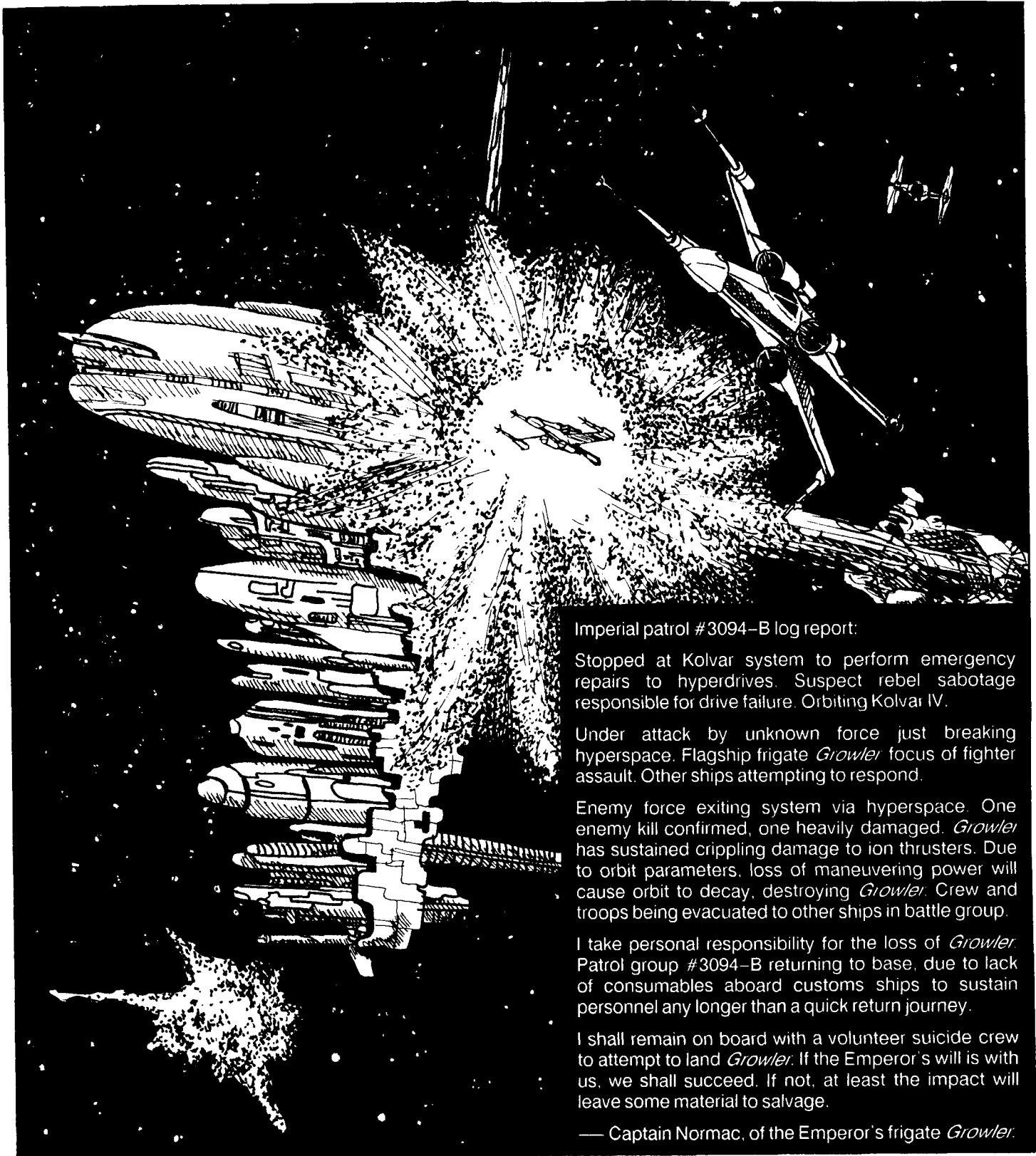
## West End Games

Imperium Romanum II (reprint), \$35, Sep  
**Star Wars:** Imperial Svcbk softcover reprint, \$18, Nov  
Deathstar Companion, \$15, Oct  
Planet in the Mist, \$10 (Jan)  
**Torg:** Storm Knight's Guide, \$15 (Jan)  
Space Gods srbk, \$18, Nov  
Kawana Heavy Weapons, \$13, Nov  
Creatures of Aysle, \$18, Oct

## White Wolf

**Vampire:** Chicago by Night, \$15, Oct  
Blood Bond, \$8, Oct  
The Succubus Club, \$12, ?  
Alien Hunger, \$10, ?

# Mr. Badspanner



Imperial patrol #3094-B log report:

Stopped at Kolvar system to perform emergency repairs to hyperdrives. Suspect rebel sabotage responsible for drive failure. Orbiting Kolvar IV.

Under attack by unknown force just breaking hyperspace. Flagship frigate *Growler* focus of fighter assault. Other ships attempting to respond.

Enemy force exiting system via hyperspace. One enemy kill confirmed, one heavily damaged. *Growler* has sustained crippling damage to ion thrusters. Due to orbit parameters, loss of maneuvering power will cause orbit to decay, destroying *Growler*. Crew and troops being evacuated to other ships in battle group.

I take personal responsibility for the loss of *Growler*. Patrol group #3094-B returning to base, due to lack of consumables aboard customs ships to sustain personnel any longer than a quick return journey.

I shall remain on board with a volunteer suicide crew to attempt to land *Growler*. If the Emperor's will is with us, we shall succeed. If not, at least the impact will leave some material to salvage.

— Captain Normac, of the Emperor's frigate *Growler*.

## A Star Wars Adventure by Craig Sheeley

## Prologue

"Yeah, they never knew what hit 'em!" the pilot gloats over his beverage. "The rebels came out of hyper and smacked the frigate before the Impies could lift a finger, then hypered out again before they got blown to pieces."

"Ghu of a trade," his neighbor agrees. "One fighter for a whole Nebulon-B frigate. I wonder what happened to it."

"Spun in." The pilot shrugs. "Probably spread all over the turf. Story is that a few crazy Impies tried to land her."

"So maybe there's some stuff left to pick up, eh?"

"Maybe. Until the Impies go back to grab it all. Drink up! The night is young!"

In this adventure, the PCs may be members of the Rebel Alliance or independents. They must have access to a ship (free traders from the **Tramp Freighters** campaign are ideal, as are rebel smugglers).

## The Mission

If the adventurers are rebels, they're assigned the task of running to Kolvar IV to salvage whatever they can from the frigate's wreckage. Turbolaser powercells and control circuitry, fire control and scanning systems, computer logs and codes, hyperdrive actuator coils... There are hundreds of parts that a stock light freighter could carry in its small hold that would be of great value to the Alliance. If the adventurers are merely independents looking for a quick credit, the parts scavenged from the ship's wreckage would be worth 500 credits per ton on the Black Market—and a freighter can carry 100 tons of cargo. It's just lying there to be picked up.

Kolvar IV is about seven days away by x1 hyperdrive. If the adventurers can make it there in a week, they're almost certain to be there before anyone else. Remember, each day of hyperspace travel time cut from the trip only increases the difficulty of the Astrogation roll by 1.

## Kolvar IV

Kolvar IV is an unimpressive little planet, smaller than normal, with a surface gravity of only 0.75 G. It has a

thin but breathable atmosphere (all Stamina difficulties are rounded up to the nearest multiple of 5). It's quite watery and warm, receiving plenty of radiation from its Type A sun—remember to pack sun-tan lotion. Characters spending too much time in the sun can pick up a nasty sunburn (–1 pip to DEX due to discomfort) if they're not careful. The oceans are inhabited by quite a few creatures that could be dangerous to a man-sized creature (and a few that could be dangerous to a starship) but the few landmasses are inhabited only by jungle plants, insects, and small amphibians.

## Meet Mr. Badspanner

When the adventurers reach Kolvar IV, they can spot the wreck of the *Growler* with little trouble—it's spread across one of the small islands that dot the blue-green globe. There is one part of the wreck that appears to be pretty much in one piece, while the rest of the 300-meter starship is scattered across the terrain. The adventurers can land their ship anywhere on the island's beaches, as the rest of the land is heavily jungled, or they can land in the central clearing created by the wreck. If they land on one of the beaches, they have a walk of several kilometers through dense forest. If they land in the wreck's clearing, they can stroll a few hundred meters to the seemingly intact portion of the downed ship.

The solid wreck looks like a colossal freak of nature and physics, an accidental fusing of disparate parts and hull plates. Engineer-types get the uneasy feeling that it's not natural and might, just might even be capable of functioning as a spaceship. Maybe some of the crew survived after all?

Everyone spots the movement at about the same time. A large door in the side, formerly one of the TIE fighter bay doors, grinds open with the sound of dry gears. A ramp extends to ground level, and a strange device clanks out. It looks like a primitive piece of construction machinery, moving on caterpillar treads, with a boom and a makeshift driver's cab. Several small green humanoids cling to the superstructure as it lurches to the dirt and rumbles in the PCs direction. They see no weapons on it. If they fire anyway, the machine

## BADSPANNER AND HIS CREW

Garfang Badspanner and his "gits" are, as Warhammer 40,000 players recognize, space orcs. Green-skinned, fang-toothed, gimlet-eyed, uncouth and rough, they are normally known for violent behavior. This lot, though, is more interested in the salvage mission than in shooting.

Badspanner is actually a Mek, one of the race's many mechanical geniuses. Meks don't use conventional mechanical knowledge, preferring their own methods of making machines. Very basic methods, involving minimum use of subtlety or finesse. Meks are masters of improvisational construction, following the ancient maxim of "if it don't work, hit it until it does!" Strangely, this works for them.

**Garfang Badspanner:** DEX 3D, Bolter 4D, **KNOW 1D+1**, Technology 7D (can be used for modifications to existing equipment only and does not represent any real knowledge of technology), **MECH 2D**, Starship Gunnery 4D, Vehicle Driving 3D, **PER 1D+2**, Command 3D, **STR 3D**, Brawling 4D, **TEC 2D**, Droid Programming and Repair 4D, Starship Repair 4D, Vehicle Repair 6D, Jury-Rig 12D (Vehicle Repair refers to non-repulsorlift vehicles, and Jury-Rig is a special skill for Meks that allows them to do temporary repairs and modifications on almost anything but microcircuits and computers. A Jury-Rigged repair or modification is subject to failure; every day, or every round of combat, roll 1D6. On a 6, the repair/modification breaks and has to be fixed again).

Badspanner usually wears an armor vest, modified so it doesn't reduce his DEX. In addition, he has 2 pips of natural armor from his organic toughness, meaning that he rolls 4D when rolling to resist injury. He carries a bolt pistol and a bolter. Both shoot explosive shells that are short-ranged but devastating.

	Dam	Short	Medium	Long
B. Pistol	5D	3-5	6-20	21-30
Bolter	6D	3-15	16-50	51-100

**Orcoid Template:** DEX 2D, **KNOW 1D**, MEC 1D+1, PER 1D+1, STR 2D+1 (with +2 pips of natural armor), TEC 1D.

**Badspanner's Helpers:** The "gits" are a sub-species of orcs. Smaller, weaker, and craftier than their masters, they do most of the work and generally clean up after Badspanner. There are a couple score of them, and they all look very similar to the PCs' unknowing eyes. They go by tool names, such as Gadget, Widget, Ratchet, Hammer, Rivet, Blivit, Socket, etc. **DEX 2D**, Brawling Parry 3D (they're good at ducking), **KNOW 1D**, **MEC 1D**, **PER 1D+2**, Con 2D+2, **STR 1D** (with +1 pip on natural armor), **TEC 2D**.

absorbs their weapons fire without real effect (in Walker scale, it has a 4D Body score. Hand weapons aren't going to hurt it much). The green humanoids hide from the fire; those that can't jump off the vehicle and run back to the solid shipwreck, shrieking, "Boss! Boss! Help, Boss!"

If the PCs don't shoot at the vehicle and its strange riders, the little green men spot them (unless the PCs hide) and stop the machine. One of the green men legs it for the shipwreck while the others cower behind the vehicle.

Whether one of the little green men reaches the ship or not, a ground-level personnel lock opens and a much larger humanoid steps out. For a moment the adventurers might mistake him for a Gamorrean; the body shape is similar. He strides busily out towards the PCs, trailed by half a dozen of the smaller humanoids. He puffs on a pipe clenched between extremely pointed teeth; the pipe looks as if it were once part of a plumbing system. He's obviously armed with a very large and potent-looking handgun and an even larger weapon slung at his side. Still, he doesn't move his hands toward either weapon as he walks over to the scene of the problem.

When he gets within shouting distance he yells, "Ere! Wot yer want? Yer scarin' da gits; day's supposed ter be workin', not 'idin'!"

Gamemasters may have to remind trigger-happy players that they've not been attacked or threatened, that the aliens haven't got any weapons at hand, and if the itchy trigger fingers persist, that several obvious projectile cannons mounted on the wreck are traversing to line up on the PCs! And they're LARGE cannons...

The large alien is more than willing to talk, if asked questions. In the meantime, the smaller aliens stand around, whispering among themselves.

When asked who he is, the alien replies (in heavily accented Standard), "I'm Garfang Badspanner, see? Da best mek on da rock!" One of the smaller aliens whispers audibly to one of the others: "Yeah, 'e's da only mek on da rock!" Badspanner swiftly turns and boots the runt right in the pants, sending him flying. "Now, den," Badspanner says, turning back to the PCs, "Wot brings yer to dis 'ere rock?"

Badspanner explains (in his broken Standard) that he and his "gits" happened upon this world in their hyperspace travels—it seems his hyperspace navigation is more a matter of luck than of calculation. As an added bonus, they found "dis 'ere wreck!" Badspanner gloats about all the "neat stuff" that he and his cohorts are salvaging from the frigate's parts. In fact, they've been building the "assembled" wreck that they're living in.

"Dis is gonna be my personal kroozer," Badspanner smirks. "'Course, it's got lotsa spare parts, so's I kin make lots more stuff when I gets back 'ome."

"'Ere, boss!" One of the gits tugs at Badspanner's sleeve. "'Ow we gonna get back, den? We doesn't know da way!" Badspanner neatly backhands him, knocking him a few meters.

"Snorra problem," he says, shrugging. "Soon's we find one 'o dem finkin' machines wot tells yer where ter go in space—wot does you lot call it? A com-pooter?" A sudden idea strikes him. "'Ere! You came inna ship, roight? Wiv a com-pooter, roight? I'll make yer a deal. I gots lots more stuff in da kroozer den I'll ever be able ter use. If you let me use yer com-pooter ter get where I kin buy one 'o my own, I'll cut yer in fer some 'o da swag!"

This is not a bad idea. The cargo room in a standard light freighter is approximately 4 meters by 3 meters by 3 meters, not even enough room to ship one disassembled turgolaser. On the other hand, Badspanner's assemblage of spare parts is practically half the size of the original frigate. Even a fraction of the heavy gear would be worth a great deal to the Alliance (or to the characters' credit accounts).

If the PCs refuse Badspanner's deal, he shrugs and says, "Garn! An' dat wuz one 'o my best idears, too," and returns to his work inside the hulk he's constructed. The PCs are free to prospect for salvage parts on their own. If they agree to the deal, he tells them to bring their ship in and land next to his "kroozer." "Don't worry 'bout yer ship," he assures them. "Not even a need ter get th' finkin' machine outer it. I'll just 'ook 'er up."

After the PCs return with their ship, Badspanner has the gits use their crane (the vehicle the PCs saw in their first encounter) to place the PCs' ship in position, and small green figures

swarm all over it, riveting and welding pieces of superstructure to attach the ship to the larger vessel! He answers PC protests with the explanation that it's the easiest and best way to wire the computer into his "kroozer." The operation is doing no real harm to the ship, and the alien workers are rigging explosive bolts so that the ship can be freed from the attachments without trouble.

The work is fast, haphazard, and crude, but the modifications seem to work fine. Within a day, the ship becomes an integrated (more or less) part of the "kroozer," complete with a tube passage to the interior of the larger vessel. Admittedly, the supports creak and groan on occasion, when people walk around inside the PCs' ship, but Badspanner and his smaller workers don't seem to mind.

## The S.S. Junk Pile

Badspanner's ship is an amazing agglomeration of frigate parts, built around a central core that used to be the ship he arrived in. A deck-plan layout of the ship is not needed or practical, as the interior changes everyday, according to Badspanner's whim and his desire to remodel. Certain sections remain more or less constant, and these are described below.

The engineering on the *Junk Pile* is as haphazard and base as that on the connections to the PCs' ship. Structural members are bolted, riveted, welded, or sometimes even nailed together. So are less massive items, like electrical conduits and plastic sealings. Apparently, Badspanner and his gits aren't familiar with the concept of engineering elegance. Wandering through the ship is an engineer's nightmare, a vision of mechanical perigatory.

It's also confusing. The corridors change from day to day, not only in direction but in makeup. One day a floor may be riveted steel, the next day replaced by fusion-formed glass. Ventilation ducts can as easily be mounted in the floor as on a wall or ceiling. Conduits and ductworks protrude into the halls at odd angles. Lighting ranges from windows to arc lamps to light-bars to nothing.

The crew of gits can pop up at any time, from any hole in the wall (literally). Usually they act as though



the adventurers are underfoot and a big nuisance, although they can give directions (normally as confusing as the ship's layout). Several attempt to con the PCs out of various pieces of technology (weapons, watches, tool kits, and anything else that doesn't look like clothing), offering pieces of salvaged frigate in return—"Ere, boss, I gotta real great deal on some rare an' valuable stuff. I'll trade yer for dat bracelet, there." They appear to have no idea of the function of any of the salvaged frigate parts they attempt to pawn off.

The more—or—less stable features of the *Junk Heap* are:

**The Bridge/Control Room.** A large room atop the ship's mass, fronted by a large window. It is furnished with a large number of gauges, speaking tubes, and analog readouts, as well as several control consoles featuring unmarked control buttons, knife switches, and levers. Apparently, the ship can't be run by fewer than three people who know the controls like the backs of their hands. The room is done in stark metal decor, since it's assembled out of unpainted metal.

**The Engine Room.** Badspanner is quite proud of the job he did kit-bashing the engines together, and the engine room shows it. It is a cavernous hall, crammed with machinery (most of it spares) and power equipment. Experienced engineers are aghast to see that Badspanner has a dozen turbolasers integrated into his design—"Day has lotser power," is his explanation. He refuses to believe that they are potent weapons. "Can't be," he says. "Day don't make a loud enuf noise. Da louder da gun, da better it iz. Stands ter reason, dunnit?" Regardless, the power potential may even be higher than the frigate's original power setup (if it doesn't blow the ship to bits when the engines are actually turned on).

**The "Drops."** A former garbage disposal that has been converted into a cesspit. An inhabited cesspit, fed by all the disposal chutes on board (even those on the PCs' ship have been linked), roamed by a small horde of alien creatures. Some are slug-like, others are legged, all live in the fungus growing in the Drops. The aliens call them squigs and warn the PCs to stay away from the drops—some of the

squigs are dangerous. Considering that the smell would stun a Rancor, the PCs shouldn't have much trouble steering clear of the drops.

**The Hold.** This hangar-sized room in the lower middle part of the ship is piled high with randomly-stacked loot, leaving only enough room for walkways and the crane-trak vehicle.

## Alarums And Excursions

While the PCs spend several days sorting through Badspanner's collected junk—he gives them their pick of the stuff—and go prospecting in the ruins of the *Growler*, they encounter some embarrassing and possibly dangerous diversions in the *Junk Heap*. Like falling through an open vent shaft in the floor when feeling their way along a dark corridor. Or getting stuck in the toilet, sucked in by the increased suction provided by a turgo-pump the gits just installed. Or being hit by the excess sludge from the drops, drained off (to provide for a more balanced eco-system) and vented through a spare pipe that happens to break near the PCs.

One of the PCs is attacked in the PCs' ship's bathroom, accosted in the shower by a biting squig, a vicious little two-legged slug beast that seems to be all teeth and digestive tract. The PC is unarmed (let's hope so, since he's in the shower) and has to fight off the beast until help can arrive or he kills it himself.

**Biting Squig:** DEX 2D (4D to attack), PER 1D, STR 2D Speed 1D (1 meter/2 meters). It has a mouth full of long, curved fangs that bite for 2D damage. Once a successful bite has been landed, the squig chomps down, having an effective 4D STR both to damage and to dislodge its toothy grip.

When the angry PCs report this to Badspanner, he's disappointed. "Garn! Too bad yer had ter kill it. It woulda made some nice sport, so it would."

## Competition

When the PCs have become thoroughly disenchanted with the idea of staying anywhere near the *Junk Heap*, remind them that there are still plenty of intact parts lying around

outside, including a large pile of extremely valuable circuitry that Badspanner and his runts couldn't find a use for.

The PCs are out prospecting when the gits come rumbling back to the ship on the crane-trak, squalling about someone shooting at them. The trak bears several blast burns that verify their story.

More concrete verification of this intrusion shows up soon. A pair of speeders loaded with gun-toting bully-boys cruise into the clearing and pause, looking over the *Junk Heap* and firing at anyone that shows himself. The attackers aren't wearing uniforms, and seem to be dressed in highly varied clothing and bits of armor salvaged from various suits. Each speeder carries four men, one of whom mans the medium blaster mounted on the back of each speeder.

Badspanner seems elated at the prospect of violence. "Roight!" he smirks. "Swing da gunz 'round an' we'll give 'em what fer!" When one of his assistants reminds him that the big guns aren't loaded, the Mek turns a deeper shade of green and bellows orders to load the guns—yesterday!

The PCs may do as they please concerning the armed intruders, including shooting their starship's weaponry at them—their ship is mounted onto the *Junk Heap* in such a fashion as to leave their weapons exposed for use.

As soon as the pirates suffer at least two casualties, they retreat speedily. If the PCs don't attack them, Badspanner's gits load one of the cannon and fire it. They miss, of course, but a ten-meter-wide crater convinces the heavily outgunned pirates to retreat.

Any PCs who are monitoring com-link transmissions (any PC on the bridge of their ship can do so easily) hear the attackers calling to someone else to "warm up the ships! We've got something here we can't handle, and we need the artillery!"

If the PCs aren't allied with Badspanner, their first notice of the new competition is the distant sound of blasters. If they choose to investigate, they observe the two speeders driving off the crane-trak. If the PCs are discovered, the pirates attack them too. If the PCs don't investigate, a speeder-load of pirates cruises by and opens fire.

**The Pirates:** All characteristics 2D, Blaster 4D, Brawling 3D, Brawling Parry 3D. Armed with blaster carbines and pistols, armored with armor vests and helmets. They ride in standard speeders. Each speeder has a medium blaster on a pintel mount at the rear, allowing 360 degree field of fire.

The pirates, when defeated, head back to their landing zone to retrieve their ships for further action. If the PCs want to follow them and do something about stopping the ships, Badspanner can't assist—"I've got ter connect da engines... I hasn't had time ter switch 'em on yet"—but he'll lend the crane-trak for pursuit if the PCs want to borrow it.

The pirates have too great a lead on the PCs to make it a chase, but the PCs can trace the pirates through their comlink traffic—apparently the buccaneers never heard of radio silence. The pirates have no pickets out at their landing zone, either. When the PCs arrive, the pirates are loading the remaining speeders into the cargo bays of three pinnaces and preparing for takeoff. There are twice as many pirates as there are PCs, and the PCs have surprise, if they want to try to stop the oversized fighters from lifting.

If the PCs don't stop the pirates, they lift off and strafe the PCs' ship and the *Junk Heap*. Knocking the heavily-armed, fast attack ships out of the air is a lot harder than taking them on the ground. The *Junk Heap's* weapons have no fire control assistance, and the green-skinned crew have Starship Gunnery skills of 1D. Even though the *Junk Heap* has a 4D Hull on Capital Ship scale, the pinnaces can hurt it before Badspanner gets the engines working.

**Pirate Pinnacle:** The pinnacle is a small spaceship or overlarge fighter. The only fighter with more armament is the B-Wing, but the pinnacle is more maneuverable. It has no hyperdrive, though, which is why the Rebellion doesn't use them. Scale: Fighter. Crew: 2. Passengers: 4. Cargo Cap: 20 metric tons, 10 cubic meters. Consumables: 1 month. Hyperdrive: No. Nav Computer: No. Sublight Speed: 3D+2. Maneuver: 1D+2. Hull: 4D. Weapons: Two Turbolasers, fire-linked. Fire Control 2D, Damage 9D. Shields: 2D.

## The Getaway

If the *Junk Heap* is attacked by the pirate pinnaces, roll 1D each turn, while the crew fires its concussion missile guns wildly. On a roll of 6 Badspanner manages to coax his Goldberged power plants into action. When that happens, shields come up to help repel enemy fire, and the hulk lurches off the ground, dripping loose pieces and shaking off unfastened debris. If the *Junk Heap* isn't attacked, Badspanner completes his engine connections easily and the ship rises toward space. If the PCs captured any pinnaces, they can be bolted to the *Junk Heap* without ill effect on speed or maneuverability.

Pinnacle fire can't dent the shields; the mad mek seems to have vastly augmented the power of the salvaged shield generators. But the way is not completely clear: The pinnaces' mother ship waits in orbit. A Corellian Corvette (Capital Ship Scale, Sublight Speed: 3D, Maneuver: 2D, Hull: 4D, Six Double Turbolasers – Fire Control 3D, Damage 4D+2, Shields: 2D. The pilot has Starship Piloting 4D, the gunners Starship Gunnery 3D) closes on the *Junk Heap*. The PCs and Badspanner have to decide whether to run, fight (the *Junk Heap* has Sublight Speed: 1D, Maneuver: 0D, Hull: 4D, Ten Concussion Missile Launchers, Fire Control 0D, Damage 9D, Shields: 4D), or make an emergency hypers-

pace jump, at +10 difficulty. A good time to use a Force point, perhaps.

If, by some chance, the *Junk Heap* manages to knock out or outrun the Corvette, it can make its jump at leisure. If the Corvette damages the *Junk Heap's* sublight engines, the PCs are going to have to fight off 50 boarding troops while Badspanner tries to repair the drives.

If the PCs aren't allied with Badspanner and try to escape in their own ship, they are pursued and attacked by a single pinnacle (Piloting 3D, Gunnery 3D) until they are destroyed or escape.

## The Fruits Of Victory

Rebel players who manage to make it back to their base are going to be very popular with Technical, thanks to the salvage. If they return with the *Junk Heap*, their credit with Technical knows no bounds, which could be handy in future missions.

Independent traders can sell their cargo of salvage for 500 credits per ton—they have their full cargo load, plus another 100 tons of prime salvage if they came with the *Junk Heap*.

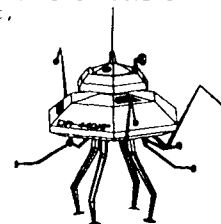
In either case, Badspanner sells enough spare parts to buy a used navcomputer and leave for his current homeworld. "If yer ever in my neck o' th' woods, come over fer a visit!" he says. "I'll show yer some real sport, wiv more excitement!" ■

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"What utter rot!

"How could we have believed such naive rubbish with the lessons of history so plainly before us? Democracies have *always* made war on other democracies; it has been a fact of life since the earliest democracies flourished in Greece, and warred continuously upon each other.

"How could we have forgotten that in the War of 1812 the two great western democracies made enthusiastic, aggressive war on each other?

"How could we have forgotten that democracies represent the will of the people, and that the will of the people is often for war?

"How could we have forgotten that Hitler was elected?"

*Janosz Skrivkin  
Chancellor of Croatia  
1999*

NOW, I'LL BE THE FIRST to admit that this title is a bit melodramatic. It is, however, basically true. There is always danger when you work with a famous duelist; there were some significant looks exchanged; and there was treasure.

Let me start at the beginning. I was a student at the University of Minnesota, majoring in Computer Programming and minoring in Research. For fun I go back over old records from the Food Riots and before, and try to solve mysteries. I don't try to find everyone or everything that disappeared, I just concentrate on unusual or important things. It was in the course of one such mystery that I became involved in this adventure.

I was researching one Travis Roberts. He was a rich man who'd made his money in the mining industry. He was born in Wyoming, took over his family's company, and built up a small fortune. He survived the Russo-American War, and moved to St. Paul soon after. He died shortly after the Riots.

Now here's where the mystery is. It seems that the mobs and the government tried to get his loot. They raided his house and found nothing but computer disks and videotapes. After the Riots government men interviewed his friends, and all they could tell them was that Roberts had hidden his stash somewhere in his home town. By then, of course, Wyoming was overrun by cycle gangs, so no other effort was made. Naturally, I was intrigued.

I suppose every young man hears at least one adventure story in his youth about a search for treasure. If we even remotely suspect such a thing in real life we take off like a shuttle. I was no exception.

I went all over the records trying to find anything I could about Roberts and his friends. I learned more than I cared to about mining. I knew as much about his private life as any of the tabloid reporters in his day. I got in touch with a few remaining family members, and they gave me more names and more data.

There was only one problem: old Travis was born in the late 1960s! Almost all of his contemporaries were dead, and the few that weren't were in "homes." It was looking like this would remain an unsolved mystery. Then I found Moses Jordan.

Moses Jordan was a boyhood friend of Travis'. They parted after high school, but re-met just before the Food Riots. Jordan had managed to live through those troubled times and keep his family together. Best of all, Moses Jordan was alive and living close to the Twin Cities.

I sent a message through Elmay, pretty standard stuff, saying how I was researching Roberts for a paper, and that I'd like his comments, and so on. It was at this point that strange things began to happen. It was four full days before Mr. Jordan replied to my letter, and when he did, all he said was "Come to my house, tomorrow, 4 p.m." My brain cells firing, I did as I was asked.

I got my second shock at his front door. He had a standard security system around his house. I wasn't surprised when I found I had to talk to a visphone before going in. I tapped a button, and

# Danger, Romance and Buried Treasure

■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
AutoDuel Fiction by  
Robert L Collins

felt my jaw hitting the pavement when I saw Diane Jordan on the other end!

I'd never met a duelist before, let alone someone of her stature. Twenty years old, and already near the top of Division Ten. I should have had some backbone, as I'm a year older than her, but I turned to jelly when she said, "Yes, who is it?"

"Ah, er, is this the Jordan residence? Is there a Mister Moses Jordan there?"

She frowned. "Why? Who are you?"

"Ah, I'm Dylan Zongker. I have an appointment to see him. Is he there?"

She shook her head. "One moment." She disappeared for a moment, then returned. Her mood hadn't improved. "Oh, alright, come on in."

Until I met Diane I'd never thought that duelists could be pleasant-looking. Oh, sure, I'd seen some attractive women on the circuit, and some of the men do look better than some actors. But I could never see someone who kills people for a living looking nice, average, pleasant. Diane broke that stereotype. She was of average height, on the slim side, with blonde hair and a nice smile. She wasn't gorgeous, but good-looking. All in all, the sort of girl you bring home to Mom.

But at that particular moment, I wasn't about to ask her out. She was less than thrilled at my being there, and did little to hide her feelings. "I suppose you're here because of Travis Roberts, Mr. Zongker."

"Well, actually—"

"I knew it!" She folded her arms and frowned. "I wish people like you wouldn't encourage him! He's not young, and anyway, it's all a bunch of—"

"Diane!" a man's voice called out. "Don't be rude to my guests."

Approaching the door was a tall man with broad shoulders and gray hair. He radiated confidence and control. I could see how he'd been able to survive to the present. "Mr. Jordan? Moses Jordan?"

"That's me." He stuck out a big hand. "You must be Dylan Zongker. Pleased to meet you, my boy." He smiled as he shook my hand. "And this, if you didn't know, is my granddaughter, Diane."

"Uh, yes. I recognized her face." He beamed at that.

"Have a seat, young man, and I'll try to help you." As I sat in a chair across from him, Diane started to leave. "Oh no, Diane," he said, stopping her. "You stay."

"I've heard this a hundred times, Gramps."

"I don't care. Sit." She sat. "Now, my boy, the

reason why I consented to have you visit me is because of your interest in Travis. I gather you've done quite a lot of research on him. Well, I've done a little on you." That threw me. No wonder it had taken him so long to reply. "You're majoring in Computers, and you've done some work on the old DOS-type machines. You also like studying the last fifty years of American history." Diane seemed to perk up slightly. Moses smiled. "That's why I let you come here. May I call you Dylan? Y' see, Dylan, Travis left behind a number of disks, as you know. What you don't know is that he left them in code."

"I tried everything. Numbers, letters, number systems, and finally I got lucky and broke his code. Then I found another problem: none of those disks tells where he hid his fortune. Again I tried everything, but this time no luck. I've had a friend out looking for other disks, but I'm dubious about it."

"What I need, Dylan, is help. If we turn up something you'll get a share, and if not I can still pay you. Would you like to take a shot at it?"

What could I say? Visions of pieces of eight dancing in my head, I agreed. I spent any free time I had over the following several days looking for clues.

I began by assuming that Roberts wanted his treasure found. After all, he'd told his friends what he'd done, he'd left behind clues, and he wasn't the hoarding type. As I looked through the disks, I found some hints as to what Roberts had hidden, how much the "treasure" was worth, and why he'd expended so much effort. But clues to the location were lacking. I began to lose my enthusiasm.

Diane didn't help my mood. She thought the search was a waste of time, and didn't mind saying so. I tried to convince her she was wrong, but only succeeded in making her more obstinate. When we didn't talk about Roberts, however, we acutely enjoyed being around each other. I opened up to her more than she to me, but it was still nice talking.

One day, when I was particularly frustrated, Diane brought me lunch. "Any luck, Dylan?"

"No." I took a morose bite of sandwich. "I'm not getting anywhere. I'm sure he wanted it found, but I just can't get a clue out of this."

"Sounds like you're looking in the wrong place."

Something sparked. "Diane, disks weren't the only thing Roberts left behind, right?"

"Right. He also left behind some old videotapes." It entered her mind too. "You don't think..."

"Why not?"

"Dylan, get real! You think he'd leave a map on video? Or maybe a message saying, 'Here's where I left my loot'? That's crazy."

"No, I don't mean that. I mean, what if there's a clue in them? Or what if none of this makes sense, unless you have the tapes?"

She nibbled on her thumbnail. "I could see that. You might have something."

"He's right as rain," Moses boomed. He was standing at the top of the stairs, smiling one of his broad, satisfied smiles. "My boy, I'm glad you're

helping me."

I put the sandwich down. "Why's that, Mr. Jordan?"

"Because you're smart." He trotted down the steps. "What just occurred to you occurred to me a few days ago. I wasn't too sure about it, so I had a friend check, while you went through the disks. I wanted to see if you'd find what I missed."

"Well, he hasn't," Diane said. "What do you know that's got you so hyped, Gramps?"

"Charlie just called. He said he's found something. He's on his way." The door alarm sounded a second after Moses stopped talking. "I'll bet that's him." He turned and bounded up the stairs. Not wanting to be left in the dark, Diane and I followed him up.

Charlie was the exact opposite of Moses: small, frail, weak, and wizened. When he walked through the doorway he was panting, and sweat dotted his face. One hand was over his chest, and another was clutching a videotape. "I found it," he exhaled. "I've found Travis'..."

He collapsed to the floor, his face twisted horribly.

I heard myself gasp. Diane ran to him. She looked up at Moses and snapped, "Get an ambulance!" Moses left the room, stricken. I bent closer. "Is he...?"

She lifted her fingers from the old man's throat and nodded. She glanced at the door her grandfather went through, then looked at me gravely. "Could you give us a moment alone?"

I nodded. After she went into the next room I carefully removed the tape from the dead man's hand and went back to the basement.

Charlie's death moved me. You'd have to be a hermit not to see people die these days, and I'd even seen duels go off on the highway right in front of me. But it's different when you can see the corpse, watch the life flow out of it. I popped in the tape hoping to get those few seconds out of my mind.

The tape was a promotional piece done about thirty years before by Roberts' company. It talked about new operations in the Black Hills, outstanding employees, and company goals and plans. It was the sort of thing you could see today at any university or corporation. What made it so special? What great clue was in it?

I dismissed the Black Hills as a location because of a lack of appropriate hiding places, but I did consider the main office in Wyoming. The video had mentioned that, at the time, the lower floors and basement were strengthened "for security in these troubled times." Other than that, nothing seemed to make sense. I was still pondering the tape when Diane returned.

"Gramps wasn't feeling well, so he went along in the ambulance," she said somberly.

"Do they know why he died?"

"Not sure, but probably a heart attack." She frowned. "Thing is, Charlie's family's never had those problems before."

"He did look winded," I pointed out, "and he was sweating. Maybe he just overworked himself."

"Maybe." She walked up to the television screen. "Watch the tape?" I nodded. "What did you find out?"

"I'm not sure. It's a company video, 'bout thirty years old. Did he ever visit Roberts' company headquarters, after the Riots?"

"Gramps? I think about ten years ago he hired someone to go in. They made it past the townies, but didn't find anything." She gave me a funny look. "You don't think that's where the great horde is, do you?"

I shook my head. "The only other locations this

video mentions are some mines in the Black Hills. I dunno, but I can't see why this tape is so important."

"Perhaps you have to see all the tapes to get it," she suggested.

Which we did, after things had settled a bit. The tapes Roberts left behind were a fairly standard assortment of movies and old television shows. There were a few more company videos, and a good thing, too. The clue to where Roberts' treasure was hidden was revealed by those tapes.

I wish I could claim that I made the discovery, but it was Diane who noticed the clue. Each of the videos mentioned different things about the company at various times, from the late Eighties to just before the Blight hit. Diane observed that each one had something in it about one Jack Clayton, from his great performance as a rookie salesman to his promotion to vice president.

"So what are you saying?" I asked when she voiced her observation. "That Clayton had Roberts' horde?"

"Maybe. Or maybe that's where the stuff is. Why else would Roberts have saved these tapes? He knew sooner or later one of his friends or family would get the tapes and disks. You said so yourself. He left clues so his stuff could be found. This has to be one of them." She frowned suddenly. "Now we have to figure out where that Clayton guy lived."

Then something clicked in my mind. "Several of the disks were personnel files. They always had addresses on them!"

She was halfway to her car in seconds. "What are we waiting for, Dylan? Let's go!"

I hesitated. "What about Division Ten, Diane?" The season started in four days, and a champ's got a lot to do in those few days.

Reminding her made her grimace. She stopped and leaned against the nearest wall. "Damn! I forgot. I haven't done much in the last three weeks, and even less this past week." She closed her eyes and chewed her thumbnail. When she reopened them, she gave me the most serious look I'd ever seen. "Dylan, do you really think we'll find something? Be honest, now. Do you think there's any buried treasure?"

Now I was against the wall. Was I sure? I thought about it carefully. This wasn't a private game. If she didn't enter the early events her career as a pro duelist would be set back at least a year. If there wasn't anything awaiting us, it would be a wasted year.

But if there was? She was a good duelist, and lucky so far, but sooner or later the luck runs out, or someone better comes along. And I didn't have much to look forward to once school was over. Computer programmers don't retire rich, and I'd be unlikely to parlay my extra-curricular activities into an exciting job. If it was a hoax it'd be bad, but if not, we'd never get an opportunity like this again.

"I think it's there, Diane," I said. "I honestly do. If not a rich man's horde, then something worth our time. Besides," I smiled, "I'm not about to tell your grandfather I'm giving up."

She exhaled a laugh. "Me neither. Let's do it!" And so we were off. Later that evening we found Clayton's address, and the next day Diane booked her and I a blimp to Casper. Moses begged to come along, but Diane refused to let him risk facing the gangs along the roads and the townies in Gillette, so he stayed behind.

The trip to Casper was slow and relaxing, so I got a chance to do some degree-related reading. Diane watched videos, read magazines, and generally enjoyed not having to do any "work." She called the AADA and got a map of Gillette,

which we took turns studying. In short, we rested ourselves for the conclusion to our adventure.

It was during the flight that I first had a slight sense of paranoia. With us on the flight was a black-haired young woman who, every so often, I caught watching us. I would have dismissed her as a fan of Diane's, except that I was sure I'd seen her somewhere before. I thought about telling Diane, but she was already making me feel inadequate, talking about how we'd have to defend ourselves from the gangs and townies. I kept my mouth shut and listened to her instructions.

We arrived in Casper safe and reasonably sound. Using her last season's winnings, and the money she got from selling her winning car, Diane bought a used-but-repaired Palomino. She wanted to get something along the lines of a Hussar, a luxury model with space that wouldn't attract attention, but there wasn't anything available. I didn't mind, though; I didn't want the pressure of being a gunner or driver. We left Casper the day after arriving. Gratefully, I didn't see the dark-haired woman after we left the airport.

The trip to Buffalo and I-90 was thankfully quiet. No one was behind us, no one ambushed us, nothing happened. We ate lunch at the truck stop there, and forged ahead. This time things got a bit tense. Just past the Powder River we caught up with a convoy. All hope of linking with it was dashed when, within half a mile of its rear guard, we saw it attacked. Diane didn't need any prompting from me; we pulled off the road and waited. The convoy barely managed to drive off their attackers, and we continued on to Gillette.

You'd be surprised how similar ruined towns in videos look like the real ones. Gillette was a collection of shot-up, burned, and decaying buildings. Each building looked like a prop from Crash City or Brother/Mother. The unreality of it made it hard to concentrate on the reality.

Clayton's house was on the southern outskirts of town. Down there the buildings didn't seem too badly damaged, but were obviously abandoned. "Aada says about a half-dozen gangs have hid out here over the years," Diane said. "It looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Yeah," I glanced around. "We on the right street?"

She nodded. "I'm positive. This is the way we have to go."

Before I could ask why, I saw why. The street that I thought was the direct route was in shambles. The asphalt was torn up and cars were scattered around. I was amazed at the scene. "What happened?"

"Two of those gangs slugged it out with each other, and with the people who stayed. After the battle most of the people left and the gangs disappeared." I shuddered.

The closer we got to Clayton's house the more nervous I felt. This would be the moment of truth. Either our guesses would be proved right, or else. Those final few minutes were agonizingly slow.

In its heyday the house must have been quite a sight. It was three stories tall, built with red brick, and had columns along the front porch. It still looked impressive, even though the brick was crumbling, the columns collapsing, and the whole house was coated with vines. We stared at it for a short while, then I said, "Let's get it over with." Diane drove up the half-circle driveway and stopped at the front door.

Two cars came out of nowhere. One came up behind us, while the other entered on the opposite side of the drive. Diane went for her gun. I yelled, "Don't shoot! We're surrounded!" She swore, but didn't pick up the gun.

"Get out of the car, you two," a voice instructed. "We don't want to harm you." We exchanged glances, then Diane shrugged and got out first. Two armed men got out of the car in front, and I heard others approach from behind.

"What do you want?" Diane challenged.

"What do you think we want, Miss Jordan?" a woman replied. I turned to look at her, and to my disgust and surprise it was the woman from the blimp.

"You followed us," I said. "You've been following us since we left the Twin Cities."

"That's correct. My name is Laura Doreau. I don't think you know me, but I'm a relative of one of Roberts' friends." I remembered the last name. "I'd been hoping someone would find out where Roberts' loot is. Thank you for your persistence."

Diane was in no mood to accept the situation. "You killed Charlie, didn't you?" I put a hand on her arm in hopes of preventing her from getting us killed.

Doreau frowned. "No. One of my employees did chase your friend. When I found out what happened, I dismissed him." A glance at her goons indicated they'd suddenly become uncomfortable. I guess she wasn't lying.

"So now what?"

"I don't intend to shoot you in cold blood. In fact, I would be willing to allow you to have a share of any loot. Of course," she smiled, "my share is going to be a lot larger than yours."

Diane's expression softened. "What if we agree to leave right now?"

Doreau's smile widened. "Oh, no you don't, Miss Jordan. I won't let you take shots at us while we dig. Now, let's get inside and start that digging."

Before we got two steps, the air was suddenly split by a loud crack—a gunshot! The townies were attacking us!

Diane grabbed me, throwing me down behind the Palomino, then dropped beside me as I scrambled to get the door open and get to our auto-rifles. As I handed Diane a rifle, I spotted Doreau's goons sprawled on the drive, blood draining from their holed bodies. I popped up to fire, but my first shots went over the heads of the townies; I was hardly skilled in firing an auto-rifle. Diane fired right into them, moving her rifle back and forth in a fatally neat line.

I ran out of ammo first and dropped behind a fender to load a fresh magazine, and realized someone was quickly approaching from my left. I aimed and almost pulled the trigger. It was Laura, fear etched in her face. I gave her a nasty frown and popped up to fire more shots at the townies. As I emptied the second magazine they ran away.

I took a hard look at our handiwork. I'd never killed anyone before. I realized how excited I'd been during the firefight and was a little ashamed. Diane noticed.

"Never been in a fight, have you?" I wanted to say something witty, but merely nodded. "Don't let it get to you, Dylan. Sometimes you have to protect yourself." She stepped to my right and saw Laura, still hiding. "Your thugs are dead, Doreau."

Laura rose slowly. She looked around the field. With a heavy sigh, she holstered her submachine gun. "Well, where do we go from here?" she asked casually. Her hand didn't stray far from the gun.

I spoke quickly, before Diane could do anything. "We might be able to leave without you," I observed. "You could take off too, but you still might come after us later. Would you be willing to take a small share of the loot and never bother

us again?"

"How small?" Diane asked. I could tell she wasn't thrilled with me.

"You and Moses get fifty percent, I get twenty-five, and she gets twenty-five. Everyone gets an equal share." the two women paused to think.

"All right," Diane said. "Doreau?" She nodded. "Fine. Let's get inside and start looking before those townies come back." That was easily agreed to.

The inside was as bad as the outside. There was dust everywhere. What furniture there was was broken. It was apparent that there had been more. The house also had subtle hints of mice, roaches, flies, and other vermin. The sooner we finished our search the better.

"Well, Dylan," Diane said, "you're the expert. Where do we find the loot?"

"The basement would be my guess." Looking around, I spotted a broken door in the base of the stairwell leading up. Next to it were the pieces of a dining chair. Putting two and two together, I pointed to it. Let's try that."

Sure enough, on the other side of the doorway, there was another door. It was steel, and had an old-style combination lock in the center. Both women looked at me with a small amount of awe. "I simply deducted that there must be some reason for that door to be ajar," I told them confidently. "That broken chair obviously didn't break over the door, but on something else. The rest was logical."

"Not bad, Dylan. But how are we logically going to get through that door?"

Laura gently pushed us aside. She put an ear next to the lock and started turning the dial. Several turns later she stood back and smiled. "Give me a hand with the handle." The door opened to reveal stairs disappearing into a dark hole. Diane took out a flashlight and shined it inside.

Covering the floor were neat stacks of books, and along the far wall were a few paintings and photographs, still in their frames. A desk was off to one side, with a half-dozen small chests on top of it. I went down the steps first, then Laura, and then Diane.

I went to the desk to check its contents. The drawers opened without a struggle to reveal stacks of printed papers. I could hardly believe what I recognized them to be.

"Damn!" Laura swore, flicking her fingers through the rings, earrings, and necklaces contained in the chest she had opened. By her expression, I gathered she wasn't happy. "Books, art, papers, and jewelry! Some treasure horde." She snatched up two chests. "I'm taking these," she announced.

Diane, who was looking over the art, reacted immediately. "Oh, no you don't. We'll divide that up as agreed, and you'll get your share." Her hand hovered near her rifle.

"Look, Jordan, this isn't loot. There's about twenty thousand in these two, and more than fifty in the other four. Lemme have these, and you'll never see me again."

"No chance!" Diane answered.

"Wait!" I moved in between them and faced Laura. "You take these two, leave immediately, and that'll be that?" She nodded. "No tricks, no stunts, you go and we never see you again, is that it?"

"That's it."

"Fine." I turned to Diane and mouthed, "Trust me." "Diane, follow her up and make sure she does as she says." Diane glared at me, but did as I

asked. She stayed in the doorway until she heard one of the cars start up.

"Okay, Dylan, explain yourself." She hadn't eased off her rifle one bit.

"Diane," I said, grinning triumphantly, "we're rich!"

"Don't be silly!"

"We are! Look at all these books. You know how much libraries pay for these? At least a thousand dollars, Diane. Those paintings? I hear paintings, even obscure ones, go for thousands! And these papers? I recognize some of the names; they're scientists and researchers. Their notes are worth thousands to collectors, universities, even other scientists." I put my hands on her shoulders. "Diane, the jewels don't matter, we're still rich!"

She looked around the room for a moment, shoved her rifle aside, and hugged me. The two of us began to laugh hysterically. We kept laughing as we loaded every little item into our station wagon. I think we laughed all the way back home.

We did indeed become rich, though carefully. Diane and I are still close friends. She gave up dueling to become a travel safety consultant. I graduated from school and now write for a game company. And Laura Doreau? We've never heard from her again. But if we do, we're more than comfortable. ■

## FUTURE VOYAGES

Look for these articles in our next issue:

**Incom T-17 Swift**  
A Jedi starfighter for Star Wars.

**Turnabout Contact**  
A Star Trek adventure

**The Demands of Justice**  
A proVarian MegaTraveller adventure

**The Spice of Life**  
Fiction by William Marden

**Christians vs. Cthulu**  
Players can triumph over those Lovecraftian nasties – if they have faith.

**A Call of Cthulu adventure**  
Including "Christians vs. Cthulu."

These articles and more in  
**VOYAGES SF #18!**



The past few months of reading (and culling!) have put a real potpourri of books past my weary eyes. All of them, well, with one exception perhaps, are worth at least one read...

### Tek War

William Shatner. 1989 Ace Books. Hdbk. 216 pp.

This one is a bit difficult for me. You see, I'm a die-hard Trekkie (vs. the Neo-Trekfan nomenclature of "Trekker"), from way back when *Star Trek* hadn't even gone into reruns, let alone syndication. Shows my years, I guess. So, when "Captain Kirk" up and writes a book, I naturally expect it to be of the same good stuff that *Trek* was. Boy, was I WRONG!

**Tek War** is one of the dullest, tritest collections of over-worked SF clichés (if I see the prefix "plas-" again, I'll probably choke), poor plotting and characterization I've had the misfortune to read in years.

The story is set in the 22nd century L.A., around a "tough ex-cop" (shades of "T.J. Hooker") who, in the opening scene, has just been awakened from four years of cold sleep—Shatner's vision of future prison. Tek, not to be confused with Tech, is a drug which, when ingested while running a self-destructing E-prom that's tied into the user's brain, produces highly realistic "trips"; and is, of course, hideously addicting. Sort of sound like something by Larry Niven? It goes downhill from there. Unless you're in a masochistic mood, pass this one by, save as a ready source of every tired SF gimmick ever created.

### Sassinak

Ann McCaffery & Elizabeth Moon. 1990 Baen Books. 333 pp.

If I was doing this column on a star rating system (you know: one star—burn it, five stars—cherish it), I'd have to give this one a scratch three at best. The authors are two that I like real well (Moon's fantasy works are committed keepers in my library), and they begin a tale that has the "feel" of Heinlein's **Citizen Of The Galaxy**.

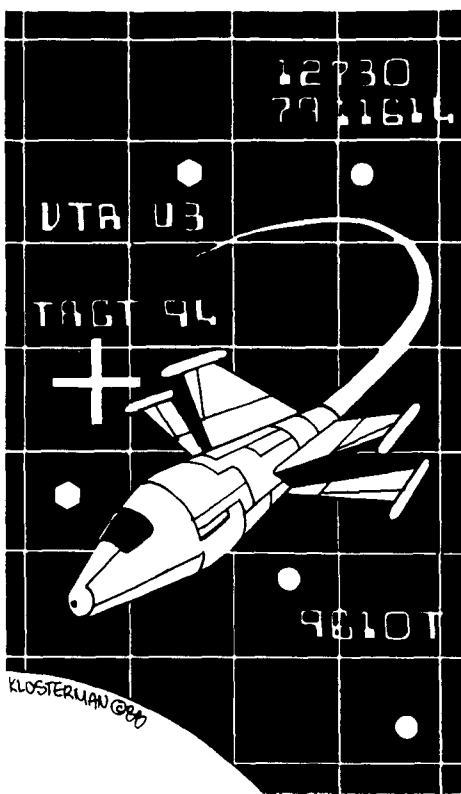
The insights in the first half or so of the book on colony life, frontier dangers and Naval Academy are well worth the book's price, and should do well towards enhancing any gaming session's background realism. After that... well, I don't have a clue as to what happened, but a highly readable tale becomes a mish-mash of confusing flashbacks and unclear descriptives. Too bad, too...

### Wolf And Iron

Gordon R. Dickson. 1990 Tor SF. 468 pp.

Back in 1974, Dickson wrote a short story that completely captured my imagination called, "In Iron Years," which can still be found in a few of his short-story compilations. It was about a scientist who was trying to cross America on a motorcycle. No real problem, save that civilization is going through it's last gasps, making the trip a bit more uncertain. Along the way, he's saved from certain death by a semi-tame wolf. The story left off right about there, and for many years I pondered how it might have continued. Dickson apparently felt the same way, for which I'm eternally grateful.

Here's a real "Five-Star" book! Well written, with the facts in order and presented clearly; you'd be cheating yourself to pass this one by. This is particularly true if you're gaming *Twilight: 2000* or another post-civilization game. Get it. Read it. Keep it. And only loan it out if the borrower is willing to put up some major collateral!



## Words To Game By

Fiction Reviews By Jerry Campbell

### Nicoji

M. Shayne Bell. 1991 Baen Books. 243 pp.

"...I owe my soul to the Company store."

Tennessee Ernie Ford made that line, from an old coal miner's song, famous years ago. Mr. Bell has taken that song's concept and added some of the good-old "unbowed human spirit" stuff that made SF of the Golden Age so captivating. A classic "David vs. Goliath" tale.

Bell has packaged it in a nicely detailed alien ecology (world builders take note!) with sharp insights into Corporate ways. *Traveller* players, here's a choice "Evil Corporation" just itching to be played!

Nicoji is the name of a crayfish-like animal, found only on one planet, and considered a rare and unparalleled delicacy by humans, one and all. It is harvested at small cost (and tremendous profit) by The American Nicoji Company through the use of indentured workers, imported under contracts with ever-changing terms that just about assure that the Company will never have to send them home.

The technology is on the level of GDW's *2300 AD* and should be readily translatable into that and several other game systems.

### The Warrior

David Drake. 1991 Baen Books. 275 pp.

Those familiar with Drake's work, particularly his "Hammer's Slammers" series, are going to love this one. Drake, if you didn't already know, is a rare breed of combat SF writer, having actually served in combat (he was a tanker in Vietnam), and his books reflect that experience in their realistic "feel." **The Warrior** is no exception, and

the action, as always, is fast-paced and clearly written with no holds barred in the detail.

This is a "Slammer's" tale, spanning a number of years and operations, revolving around one particular merc in the outfit. He's something of a discipline problem for Col. Hammer, being an excellent tanker but a lousy soldier: won't follow orders, goes off half-cocked, gets his fellow mercs killed covering his backside—that sort of thing. Does he ever redeem himself? I'm not telling!

Gamers playing merc units, here's how it's done—all of it!

Why some gaming company hasn't picked up on the weapon systems Drake uses for the Slammers is beyond me, 'cause the stuff, taking a veteran's viewpoint myself, is nothing short of awe inspiring. I'd have given my back teeth for a rifle like they carry, or a good A.I. system that's standard on their armor.

Along with the main tale, **The Warrior** has an additional short story, "Liberty Port"; a tight, well-crafted, poignant story of an R&R facility created especially for mercenaries. The Dolls are particularly intriguing...

### Seeds Of War

Kevin Randle & Robert Cornett. 1986 Ace SF. 265 pp.

Awile back, I panned a book of Mr. Randle's called **Galactic Silver Star**. This book predates that one, and shows me that the team of Randle and Cornett should have stayed together; it's a much better read!

Here's the story line: an American Survey Ship sends back a radio message, now some 50 years old, that they're under attack while in orbit around Tau Ceti III. The President of New America (of course—Old America wouldn't do the following to it's youth, right?) calls for an immediate draft of 12-14 year olds, both genders, to ship out for Tau Ceti. They'll be trained en route (the trip is to take five years) into an elite army whose mission is to teach the aliens that they can't "mess with the U.S." (or any other humans).

The plot's rather predictable, as is the ending, but the account of the trip there and the fight on and in Tau Ceti III, given as personal points-of-view by several main characters, is interesting and well done. The weaponry and equipment are approximately *Traveller* TL 9, save for the ships, which are sublight.

### Nor Crystal Tears

Alan Dean Foster. 1982 Del Rey SF. 231 pp.

An oldie, for sure, *Nor Crystal Tears* is one of those "cherish forever" classics. This is a beautifully done First Contact story, told largely from the "alien" point of view of a race known as the Thranx.

The Thranx are an insectoid race, somewhat resembling a preying mantis, with a highly developed technology and rigid society. They reside in underground Hive-cities, preferably in climates akin to the Amazon. Endothermic and exoskeletal, what we'd consider temperate, they find downright Siberian.

Up to their meeting with Humanity, the Thranx's only contact with any other sentient beings had been occasional raiding forays of a reptilian race called the AAnn. Real brigands, the AAnn, so the Thranx are understandably leery of another endoskeletal race.

The world details and well thought out mind-set of the Thranx, along with a finely crafted story, made this a true pleasure to (re)read. Reprinted a couple of times, it shouldn't be difficult to find. ■

MOST ADVENTURERS regard police as annoyances at best, or as serious foes at worst. This is because most adventurers are usually engaged in something illegal. This adventure gives them a look at the other side of the law.

## Law and Order

The vast majority of worlds in the Imperium have some sort of law enforcement provided for their citizens by their governments. Some worlds use volunteer peace officers, or resort to citizen mob law. Under extraordinary circumstances, the Imperial government responds to violations of Imperial law, or local upheaval of civil order, by sending troops to keep the peace. After a basic level of security is established, these units are replaced as soon as possible by trained police; combat soldiers don't make good cops, and vice versa. If there are no locally trained police available, the sector Ministry of Justice hires a cadre of experienced police to train a new constabulary.

The PCs have been hired by a private security company, Today Muldoon LIC. This company has been contracted to provide basic police services on the agri-world of Tureded (Lanth 0804-C465540-9). As soon as the cadre instructors can train a new force of cops for Tureded, the job is over. Until then, hired off-worlders constitute the police force. All of the PCs should be from homeworlds other than Tureded, and should have some sort of basic weapons training or security experience.

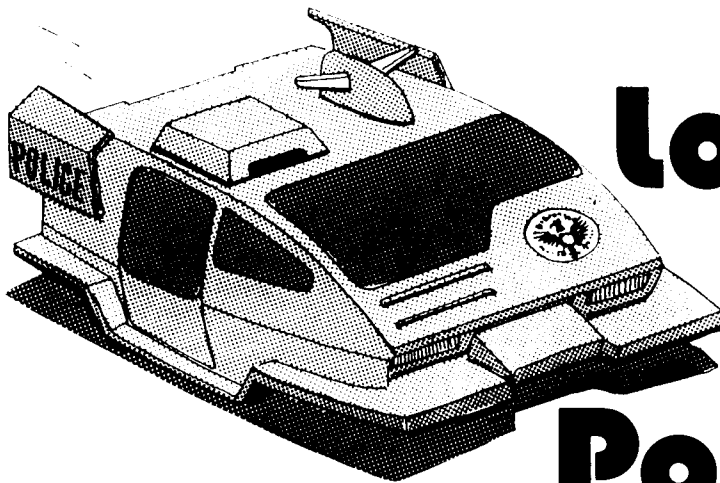
The new peace officers are legalized as deputy subsector constables, paid Cr2500 per month, with full benefits (health, dental, etc.). On completion of the contract, each officer receives a voucher good for travel anywhere in Lanth subsector, plus a Cr5000 bonus. The PCs are not being hired as combat mercenaries—there are too many of them on Tureded already. The subsector authorities want cops, not commandos; the job is to restore law and order, not something most mercenary companies are known for.

The police company assembles at Equus, four parsecs away from Tureded. The two weeks spent traveling to Tureded are used for the police briefing, both on the general situation and on the officers' duties.

The general situation on Tureded could be described as barely stable. During the Fifth Frontier War, the planet was occupied by the Outworlds Coalition. A Zhodani fleet bombarded the planet's four starports and the population scattered to the extensive rural farms, leaving the starport cities (the only urban areas on the world) to the occupying troops. For a brief period, the Zhodani stayed at Tureded, trying to establish a forward base for attacking Rhyllanor, but soon turned over the occupation to a Vargr army that was virtually stranded there. The Vargr soon took up raiding the farms for supplies and anything else they could grab, embroiling themselves in a guerilla war with a well-armed populace. When the Imperium retook Tureded at war's end, the Vargr were repatriated and people began to return to the cities.

The Vargr occupation, accompanied by an

# Support Your Local Police



## A Traveller adventure by Wallace Greer

Imperial Scout Service investigation into extensive spy and mole networks within the Tureded government, left the world without effective government. The Scout Service is overseeing the process of electing a new government within the year.

At the moment, order is being kept by a division of marines. This is difficult, as the political scene is in a state of flux, private troops have been hired by anyone with anything worth protecting, the rural population is still violently xenophobic and armed with high-powered weapons stolen from the Vargr occupation troops, and the citizens of Tureded are not happy with martial law. It is a fact that their only real law before the invasion was that there were no laws. The new cops are shown examples of their new beat, including holos of the occupation, and the devastation still remaining. The citizens of Tureded have been bombed, routed, at war and under some sort of martial law for over two years now. Sensible adventurers should by now be realizing that this place is no easy ticket...

The PCs are assigned to the city of Davivil, built near Threoklok Port. The city has an estimated population of around 48,000, small by most standards. Civil services (water, power, transport links) have been restored, as well as

nearly full starport facilities. There is no danger of food shortage, since Tureded's farms routinely export excess crops to Rhyllanor. There is a station house—an office building, damaged and abandoned during the war—and temporary quarters at a nearby prefab hotel. There is a fairly well-equipped TL 9 hospital in the city; like most businesses on Tureded, it's a pay-as-you-go operation. Even ambulance service costs—payment on delivery. Civil services (utilities, power, street-clearing and repair) are all private enterprises.

The PCs are to patrol Davivil and keep the peace. Disarming the populace is nearly impossible—nearly everyone seems to carry a weapon of some type, even if it's only a knife—so the officers' legal duties consist of preventing violations of basic law and apprehending the violators. Basic law in this case is restricted to the so-called "major crimes": Murder, assault, robbery, theft, forgery, illegal use of psionics, and terrorism. Offenders are tried before the court set up by the Ministry of Justice, presided over by a slightly loony local volunteer magistrate. Of course, the officers are also charged with assisting citizens in emergencies.

The PCs have prison facilities and an arsenal built into their "station." Available are four grav



cars (which are computer-linked with the station and contain a medkit, shotgun, medium range communicator, tools for emergency rescue, restraints and a back seat secure area for three prisoners. A factor 8 armorglass partition separates the secure area and the front seats. The cars are not armored). Personal equipment consists of a uniform (cloth armor), a helmet with integral short range communicator and respirator/gas mask, an auto-snob pistol with tranq rounds, a nightstick, a tranq gas grenade, and a hand computer.

The PCs have to patrol the city at all hours, with at least two cars on patrol at all times. Beyond the city is outside of their jurisdiction, and the heavily-armed farmers don't think well of city folk, or of "city-slicker" cops nosing into farm business.

A word of warning from the Commissioner of Justice on Tureded: "You're here to set a good example. Be friendly, helpful, and remember that you're here to help the citizenry, not act like stormtroopers. Everything done will be strictly legal, aboveboard and by the book." Commissioner Hollar will be watching.

By this time, even the dimmest player should be wishing he or she hadn't signed that contract with Today Muldoon LLC.

## Referee's Information

As usual, things are not all they seem. Davivil looks and acts a little like Beirut, with people trying to rebuild their lives among the devastation. For added effect, have some of the PCs talk to some of the Imperial marines, who are pulling out two days after the PCs' arrival. Include some stories of barroom brawls that turned into firefights when mercenary units got involved, of the constant sounds of gunfire during the night, of occasional armed gangs stupid enough to take on the Imperials and packing enough firepower to be considered a serious threat. Build up an atmosphere of continuous and random violence, then remind the players that their characters are restricted to the weapons provided, and there are serious penalties for officers who kill a citizen.

In addition, Davivil is not like a normal TL 9 city. It's too small, and too rough. Think of Dodge City in the old West with grav-cars and laser weapons. It runs strictly on free enterprise, without such things as heavy government or bureaucracy—at least it used to, before "Bossy Brenda" Hollar brought in her by-the-book administration. The locals aren't fond of all the paperwork and protocol, so they're relieved to see the unsympathetic troops replaced by police. Police they can deal with.

The players are in for the safest and most professionally frustrating adventure of their lives.

## The Order of Law

Like most rural societies, the culture on Tureded has evolved into a sort of community-controlled anarchy. The first settlers were farmers, put there to feed the hungry planets of

the sector's expansion. When the boom passed them, they stayed and continued their insular, drab lives on the sub-tropical paradise planet.

Growing interstellar commerce added a new element. Just three parsecs from Rhyllanor and at the intersection of three J-1 routes, Tureded was the logical choice for a trade port. Four class C ports were constructed and overgrown startowns soon appeared around them. In no time, the towns were crawling with beings interested only in making money, with no laws to restrict them.

The legal government of Tureded is a farm-dominated assembly that is largely concerned with protecting the ecology from off-world interests, collecting extremely modest tariffs to pay for itself, and keeping the city-folk in their urban environs where they belong. The actual governmental power in urban Tureded is controlled by a complex web of criminal organizations, each controlling its own territory. Until the war, these mobs were happy and reasonably content to make money through shipping, smuggling, and providing package deals on civil services to the city people. War and occupation savaged these operations, and they're just now beginning to recover from the disaster. The troop pull-out removes the final obstacle from a reestablishment of the old order: martial law.

Even so, the problems of rebuilding are staggering, and Commissioner von Hollar's strict edicts regarding law threaten reoccupation unless the lawlessness subsides. It's enough to make an old mobster go straight. Like Mr. Nukko "the Knife" Talarshi, the most influential Don of Davivil.

## Law and Adventure

The goal of the adventure is simple: the PCs are going to have a strangely easy task keeping order, thanks to the support of the local populace. A frustratingly easy task, where they know the law is being broken, but they can't find any evidence or witnesses.

Nukko, being a smart crook, has decided that law and order are good for crime, and other business. Accordingly, he's assigned various enforcers, thugs and other professionals to protect and assist the cops pounding the beat on his turf—without the cops' knowledge, of course.

At the hotel that serves as their quarters, the new police are given excellent treatment by the staff: the food is superb, the entertainments first-class, and the staff and patrons friendly. This good will extends to the streets, where passersby seem genuinely happy to see the cops on patrol, answering all questions (even answering some with the truth). Residents and construction workers are out repairing building damage, businesses are plying their trades, and all without friction. Everyone carries weapons, but nothing more potent than a knife or pistol, and the weapons seem to be treated more like clothing accessories—like a hat or jewelry—than like armaments. Nearly every business has a weapons-check policy, and sharp-eyed PCs may note that some have very sophisticated security systems as well, none of which are

linked to the police computer system.

Its an idyllic beat, pervaded by community cooperation, universal cheerfulness and no illegal activity at all, except for assisting the occasional drunk who hasn't got taxi fare home. This state of affairs persists for at least the first week of the PCs' assignment, giving them time to become frustrated at the lack of action or relax their guard, convinced that this is a vacation assignment. Then spring the following series of events on them.

### Midnight Withdrawal

A mercenary platoon, down on its luck and unable to find an employer, decides to make a midnight illegal withdrawal from the Davivil Bowie Street Commercial Finance Center. One of the PC patrols hears a virtual explosion of small-arms fire in the distance, accompanied by the lights and flares of a firefight. Unfortunately, the police station is five minutes away by grav car, and the grav car patrol is at street level and about three minutes away. Davivil street level is a choked environment, complete with ubiquitous pedestrian overpasses (heavily-armored, by the way) spanning from building to building. As the patrol hits the siren and starts toward the firefight, a hovertruck suffers a breakdown in front of them and two grav-vans have a minor fender-bender pileup behind the patrol car, trapping them there while the van drivers calmly discuss insurance policies and the hovertruck driver struggles to start his massive vehicle again, assisted by helpful passersby. This situation lasts a few minutes, during which time the firefight doubles in volume, punctuated by the explosions of some heavy weapons. The way finally clears to go to the scene of the crime. The streets are now strangely clear of traffic, despite the inhabitants' custom of nocturnal activity to avoid the heat of Tureded's equatorial region.

The sounds of gunfire stop completely before any of the officers reach the scene of the crime. When they arrive at the Finance Center, there is no firefight—the only people there are bank personnel and a few customers. There are some shell casings lying around, blood spatters that are being cleaned by a vacuum robot, holes in the walls (some of them rather large) and a single stunned man in camouflage uniform handcuffed to a water fountain. The Center's guards, picture-perfect in clean uniforms, report that there was an attempted holdup, perpetrated by the single prisoner. Staff and customers verify the story: a daring one-man holdup, they say. His weapon was, uh, lost in all the excitement.

The prisoner is incoherent, in a state of shock. After he recovers, he is reluctant to answer any questions, insisting that he worked alone and really didn't want to hurt anyone. At the trial the next day, he pleads guilty and throws himself on the mercy of the court while counsel for the Talarshi Insurance Company (the owner of the Finance Center and parent company of the security firm that provides the Center's guards) presents overwhelming evidence and a string of witnesses testifying to the

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

### Nukko "The Knife" Talarshi

A97CE5 Age 54 Cr: Millions  
Leader-5, JOT-4, Bribery-3, Streetwise-3,  
Admin-2, Legal-2, Carousing, Forgery,  
Gambling, Interrogation.

Nukko is a genial, gregarious mob boss who fronts as a business leader and CEO of Talarshi Insurance. He is always in the company of at least two attractive and deadly women.

### Baroness Brenda von Hollar

759DCC Ex-Marine Colonel Age 40  
Cr: Lots

Admin-7, Legal-5, Leader-3, Animal Handling, Carousing, Combat Rifleman, Equestrian, History, Hunting, Medical.

"Bossy Brenda" was a lawyer for most of her marine career, and was selected for the task of administrating Tureded because of her work with distress relief programs for the war-ravaged worlds in the Jewell Subsector. She is a "by-the-book" administrator, tough and fair, but a little shy of experience with human nature outside the office.

accused's guilt. The whole thing resembles an episode of "Night Court" written by Gilbert and Sullivan.

At the short trial, the PCs meet Mr. N. K. Talarshi (better known to more unseemly citizens as Nukko "the Knife"), who congratulates them on a job well done, apprehending the culprit and generally making Davivil a safe place to live. Nukko is a moderately-tall man with greying hair and rough features. He wears the finest clothing, patterned after the latest conservative fashions from Rhylanor, done largely in greys. He's a smooth talker, with an accent from the street. He is accompanied by a pair of tall, gorgeous women (one redhead human, one golden-blond Aslan) in tight clothing, both of whom move with the easy grace of trained fighters. The human wears a military TL 13 laser pistol and the Aslan carries a gauss pistol in her sporran, making them the most heavily-armed people the PCs have seen since the marines left.

If the PCs ask Nukko why he should be satisfied with the outrageous explanation that one man did all that damage to his firm, he shrugs and eloquently says, "Hey, I'm a businessman, not a detective. Justice has been served, and I'm happy."

### Snatched Supplies

Police work returns to boring routine. Give the PCs some calls for assistance: helping to clear a traffic jam for an ambulance, arresting brawling drunks, citing some teenagers for grav-racing through the city's street levels on stolen grav-bikes, mediating a marital quarrel. Most of these tasks are easy, since almost everyone treats the police with respect and

attention. Only the belligerent drunks and bike-racing kids offer any trouble—the drunks because they don't know better, and the kids because they're country boys in raising Cain and don't care. The grav-bike incident is a fine opportunity for a running chase and gunbattle; the kids have revolvers.

Then reports start coming in from the starport about stolen shipments of building materials. Normally, starport security handles this sort of thing, but the shipments are passing out of the port into Davivil and is therefore in the PCs' jurisdiction. The shipments in question are largely stolen from NT Construction, one of the contractors involved in the upcoming starport expansion. The PCs can handle this plot in true police detective style (if you don't know what that is, watch *Dragnet*). Stakeouts of the starport and NT Construction's warehouses are good; so is investigation of other construction contractors to look for the missing materials. In any case, the PCs have to go see the CEO, Nukko Talarshi, about the crimes.

Talarshi lives in a palatial block atop one of Tureded's tallest buildings, the Talarshi Tower. The decor and opulence are excessive—make sure to impress on the players just how excessive the place is. And everywhere they look, there are lovely women, mostly doing the administrative work that keeps his enterprises going.

Nukko is a most gracious host, having the PCs immediately ushered into his lavishly furnished penthouse office, where his two attractive "companions" are lounging about. When asked about the shipment troubles, Nukko bemoans the lack of decency and honesty in the business, and assures the officers that his insurance company has had additional security posted and they needn't worry about it happening again. As for the stolen shipments, he'll heroically absorb the loss and continue on.

Investigations of other contractors reveal only the fact that a lot of them don't keep good records, something Baroness von Hollar will be interested in seeing for tax purposes. Frankly, all the contractors look suspicious. Stakeouts of the starport pay off as the officers nab a hovertruck loaded with stolen goods. Confusingly, the driver works for NT Construction! He claims that the cargo was just returned. Nukko shows up at the police station the next morning to verify the story, saying that an anonymous tip to his security people told them where they'd find the shipment. He promises to relay the next tip to the police.

In fact, the next tip does come to the police, telling them where they can find the culprits who are stealing the shipments. When the PCs burst in to raid the suspect warehouse of Boros Builders, they find the entire criminal crew armed but sound asleep. If the PCs think to run a blood analysis on the crooks, they find that all of them were orally drugged; maybe through the water system. . .

### Sassy Sodbusters

Davivil, like the rest of Tureded, braces for its political future. A new government is to be

elected, a government which will aid in the Scout Service's decision on which starport gets upgraded to Class B. Baroness von Hollar has radically changed the voting laws from regional representatives to a one sophont, one vote system. With the old system, the number of representatives was determined by how much land they represented, a method favoring the farmers. Now, the balance of power will shift to the cities, and the farmers don't like it. A group of farmers, led by politician and farm-owner Jed Sastraman, bring a large convoy of large agro-bots and machines into the city to block the streets around the starport and interfere with the shipment of goods.

The protest group is remarkably well-behaved, considering the townies' behavior as they line the roads and shout abuse at the farmers. A large number of brown-uniformed guards are on hand, security of the Strong Arm party, of which Sastraman is the leader. As the farmers' spokesman, Sastraman is extremely polite to the police and apologetic about the disturbance, claiming he'd never consider breaking the law or disrupt order except in extreme circumstances. "These, of course, are extreme circumstances. The people of the land shall be heard, and we shall not move until we are heard by the Emperor's representative!"

No matter how the PCs threaten or plead, the farmers won't budge. A serious incident occurs when a car of townies cuts across the sidewalks to roar past the blockade, the passengers hurling epithets and overripe produce. One of the farm machines sideswipes the car and knocks it over; another farmer in a combine made to process whole trees closes in on the car, but instead falls through a massive and suddenly appearing hole in the street. PCs with Demolitions skill may observe that the hole was just skillfully blown in the street. The farmer in the hole is uninjured, but his combine is totaled. A worker from Knife-Edge Utilities apologizes for the incident ("I guess we didn't stabilize that section of pavement.") and an insurance investigator from the Talarshi Insurance Company, insurer for Knife-Edge Utilities, assures the shaken farmer that he'll be recompensed for his loss. Sastraman, anxious to avoid any further trouble, orders a retreat back to the countryside, vowing to take the matter up with Commissioner von Hollar personally.

### Crime Wave

Developments after the protest march pick up when Commissioner von Hollar reviews the PCs' arrest reports and finds them lacking. Other police beats on Tureded are marked by gunfights, injuries, and other mayhem approaching warfare levels. But the PCs' beat is the picture of peace and tranquility, and she wants to know why. She says she's arriving at Davivil in a week to look over the situation herself. Her tone leaves no doubt that she's coming to crucify the characters.

Suddenly, there is a crime wave in Davivil! The PCs are kept hopping by alarm after alarm flooding their computer, sending the patrols scurrying to thwart a rash of serious holdups

and break-ins. In almost every case, though, the crooks are still at the scene when the police arrive, and blissfully oblivious of the police until confronted, whereupon they surrender almost immediately ("Cheese it, the cops!" "Ya got me, copper. Don't shoot!" "I dunnit; it's a fair cop."), dropping their superior weapons and trotting humbly off to a soon-bulging jail. Give the players several chances to enact suspenseful arrests, unsure of when the situation will erupt into lethal violence, until they catch on to the fact that the criminals seem to be more ready to be caught than to actually commit crimes.

The perpetrators are tried with a swiftness and efficiency rarely seen in any court proceedings, with the Talarshi Insurance counsel prosecuting them all (since most were apprehended committing crimes in businesses insured by Talarshi). The prosecution succeeds in convicting all the accused, but ends up calling for lenience because they're all "first-time offenders." The judge levies a lot of community service sentences.

On the day of von Hollar's arrival, the PCs are stunned with a message from kidnappers claiming to have captured Commissioner von Hollar and her small retinue. They're holding her for ransom, and expect one million credits to be delivered in exchange for the victims' lives.

This is serious. Kidnapping an Imperial official is a severe crime against the Imperium, and

such hostages are treated as already being dead. Imperial troops might storm the hideout, or bomb it, but the Imperium never negotiates or pays ransom. Upon news of the kidnappers' communication, the company or Scout Service troops at Twelveoklok Port readies itself for action.

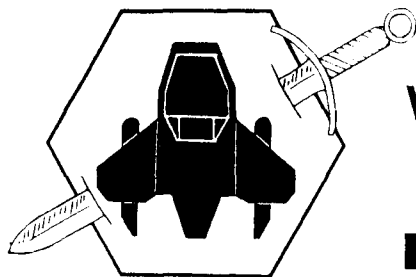
The informer's network at Davivil is still in action. The PCs receive an anonymous tip, telling them where the kidnappers are holed up, in another old office building on the outskirts of town. The PCs have a choice: They can alert the marines and sit back to watch the action, or they can try a surprise rescue themselves. They haven't got marine weaponry to try it, though—only their service pistols, shotguns, and tranq gas grenades, with a couple of tranq-gas firing grenade launchers for backup.

Should the PCs try the rescue, they have to move stealthily through the largely abandoned office building, facing goons armed with SMGs, ACRs, and a gauss weapon or two. They have help, though—Nukko has had a large number of small operatives (mostly non-human) infiltrate the building through the duct system, armed with silenced pistols firing armor-piercing ammo. The PCs don't know about this, of course, and may well wonder how a shotgun can take down an armored thug so easily (never seeing the small sharpshooter sniping from a nearby vent).

When Commissioner Hollar is rescued, she's ready to prosecute the kidnappers and their organization, revealing that they were trying to pin the job on someone named Nukko. She's also angry at the PCs, no matter what they did—if they rescued her, they broke the rules, since that's the marines' job. If they alerted the marines, she wants to know why they didn't try to handle the situation themselves! At any rate, she's no longer suspicious of the lack of business in Davivil, and everyone can breathe easier, particularly Nukko, who doesn't want to have to trade a whole new crop of cops just yet.

## Law and Further Adventures

The campaign can go on as long as the players and referee wish, since the election is coming up and the private mercenary armies are setting to clash in a flurry of political actions. Other suggestions for adventure include another mobster trying to get the cops to go on the take, a gang war fought in the PCs' sector, an irate farmer come to haul his daughter back from the sinful city by main force, commercial disputes, and secret inspections by "Bossy Brenda" von Hollar. ■



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## FEDERATION STARSHIPS: A-401 CLASS I ASSAULT BOAT and CORAL SEA CLASS VIII ASSAULT CARRIER

GARY A. KALIN

The importance of air support for ground forces was a costly lesson learned by Starfleet Command during the Four Years War and small engagements since. A common Klingon tactic when landing a ground force is to beam ground units down and launch gunboats. The assault starship would move off to engage targets away from the planet, giving the troops and gunboats time to complete their mission. The Klingon gunboats had more firepower than Federation shuttlecraft used in surface combat missions. They provided fire support and disrupted defender landing operations. It took a starship to deal with the gunboats effectively.

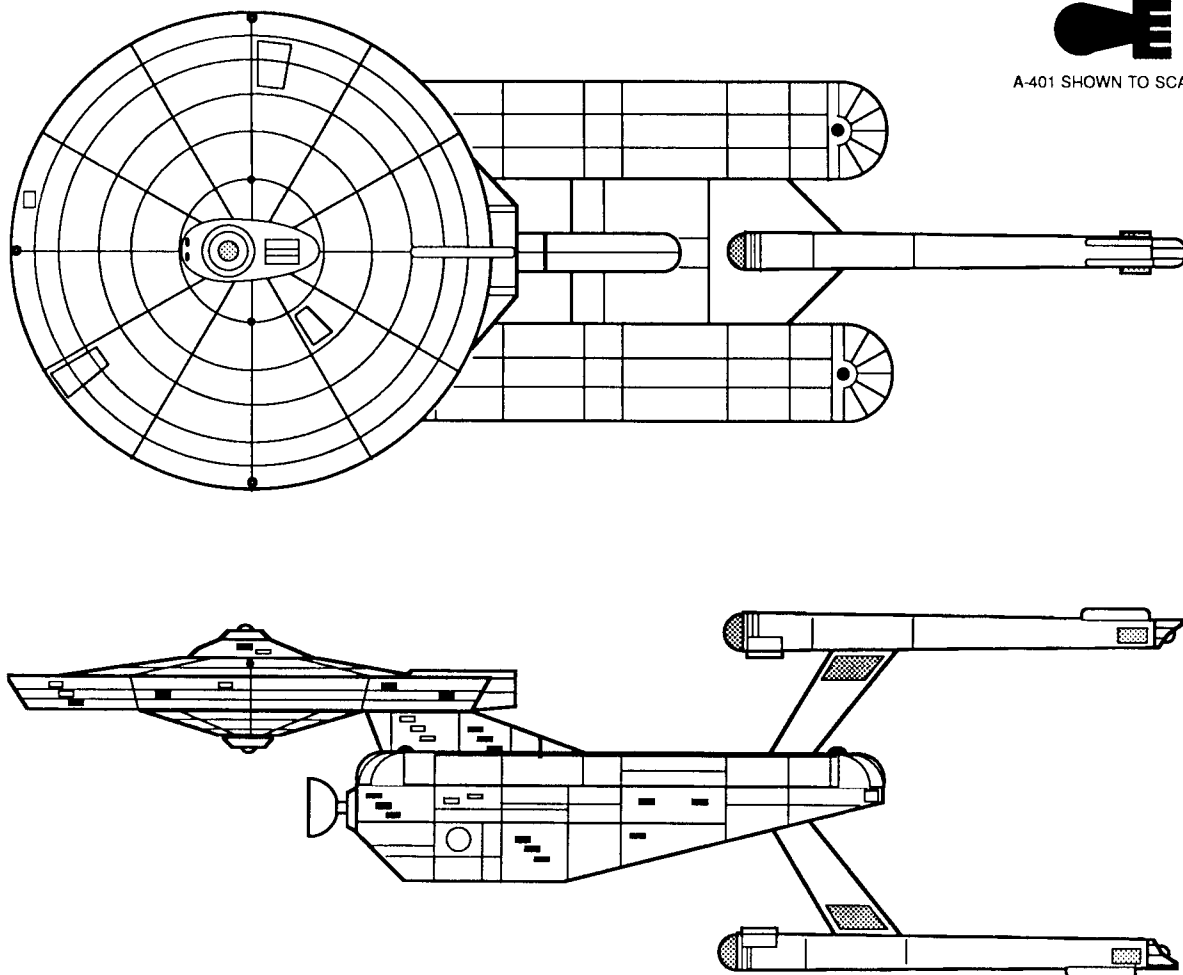
Starfleet Command needed a solution that could counter

the Klingon gunboat threat and provide increased support for ground forces without dispatching a starship. A request for a proposed sub-light assault boat was sent to all Federation spacecraft contractors.

The major design requirements for the proposed assault boat were that it must be class I size and have only impulse engines to reduce production and maintenance costs. The class I size would allow it to be loaded into most starship shuttlecraft hangars.

The assault boat could only have impulse engines if it was to operate closely with a starship. The warp fields become unbalanced when two or more sets of warp engines are

### CORAL SEA CLASS ASSAULT CARRIER



A-401 SHOWN TO SCALE

activated in close proximity. Warp drive engines also have large size and weight, limiting the number that could be carried in a hangar bay.

Most of the designs submitted were underpowered and poorly armed. Starfleet wasn't impressed with any of the designs until Collins Aerospace offered the A-401. Collins Aerospace was no newcomer to sub-light vessel design. They had produced many small sub-light support craft for the Starfleet Marines.

The A-401 earned its approval from its multi-impulse engine system. The M.I.E. system uses four small control computers, one for each of its four engines. The control computers monitor basic functions and make all necessary adjustments and corrections to maintain proper engine output. The control computers respond to commands from the main engineering computer.

The Collins design was just what Starfleet wanted. The four impulse engines provided the assault boat with sufficient power to be a serious combat vessel. They ordered ten prototypes for evaluation.

The A-401 passed its evaluations in little over six months. A total of 1,600 units were ordered to replace many lower powered shuttlecraft that were in service as assault craft.

Starfleet decided to order ten starships specifically designed as a mothership for the A-401. The U.S.S. *Coral Sea* was the first assault carrier completed. All were named after famous wet navy aircraft carriers.

## Coral Sea Class VIII Assault Carrier

### GENERAL DATA:

MASS: 119,218 mt    CONSTRUCTED: 10  
IN SERVICE: 10    DATE ENTERED SERVICE: 2/0207

### HULL:

SUPERSTRUCTURE POINTS: 22

### WEAPONS:

PHASER TYPE: 4 FH-6    FIRING CHART: N  
MAXIMUM POWER: 3  
FIRING ARCS: 2 FORWARD, 1 PORT, 1 STARBOARD  
TORPEDO TYPE: 2 FP-5    FIRING CHART: R  
POWER TO ARM: 1    DAMAGE: 16  
FIRING ARCS: 2 FORWARD

### SUPPORT:

COMPUTER TYPE: M-2    LANDING CAPABLE: NO  
CARGO: 200 scu    CREW: 250    TROOPS: 100  
SHUTTLECRAFT: 6    A-401 ASSAULT BOATS: 10  
TRANSPORTERS: 6 PERSON: 4, 20 PERSON: 2, CARGO: 1

### SHIELDS:

SHIELD GENERATOR: FSK  
MAXIMUM SHIELD POWER: 16    SHIELD RATIO: 1/2

### ENGINES:

WARP ENGINE TYPE: FWE-2    NUMBER: 2  
POWER UNITS AVAILABLE: 13  
TOTAL WARP POWER UNITS: 26  
STRESS COLUMNS: G/K

MOVEMENT POINT RATIO: 4/1 (LOADED)  
3/1 (UNLOADED)

MAX SAFE CRUISING WARP SPEED: 7/6

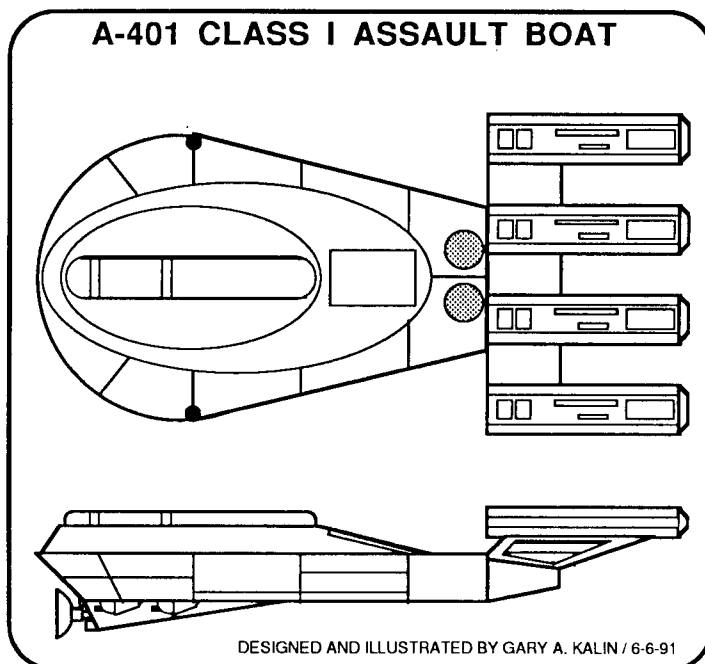
EMERGENCY WARP SPEED: 9/8

IMPULSE ENGINE TYPE: FIF-1

POWER UNITS AVAILABLE: 12

### COMBAT EFFICIENCY DATA:

WDF: 11.8    D: 90.46    CE: 10.67



## A-401 Class I Assault Boat

### GENERAL DATA:

MASS: 4,810 mt    CONSTRUCTED: 1,600  
IN SERVICE: 1,552    DATE ENTERED SERVICE: 2/0206

### HULL:

SUPERSTRUCTURE POINTS: 2

### WEAPONS:

PHASER TYPE: 4 FH-1    FIRING CHART: F  
MAXIMUM POWER: 2    FIRING ARCS 4 FORWARD

### SUPPORT:

COMPUTER TYPE: L-12    LANDING CAPABLE: YES  
CARGO: NONE    CREW: 2    TRANSPORTERS: NONE

### SHIELDS:

SHIELD GENERATOR: FSC  
MAXIMUM SHIELD POWER: 14    SHIELD RATIO: 1/1

### ENGINES:

WARP ENGINE TYPE: NONE  
IMPULSE ENGINE TYPE: FIA-3    NUMBER: 4  
POWER UNITS AVAILABLE: 3  
TOTAL POWER UNITS AVAILABLE: 12  
MOVEMENT POINT RATIO: 1/1

### COMBAT EFFICIENCY DATA:

WDF: 2.0    D: 38.9    CE: 0.7

# Coral Sea Class VIII Assault Carrier

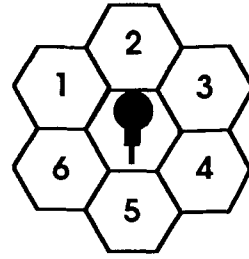
Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Captain's Skill Rating: \_\_\_\_\_ Crew Skill Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

**Movement Ratio - 4/1 (Loaded) 3/1 (Unloaded)**

Shield Ratio - 1/2 Maximum Shield Power - 16

Stress Columns: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Damage Chart: C



## System Repair

1st Hit- 1 to 8

2nd Hit- 1 to 6

3rd Hit- 1 to 4

4th Hit- 1 to 2

5th Hit- Out

**Sensors**

**Shields**

1	2	3	
			1
			2
			3
			4
			5
4	5	6	
			1
			2
			3
			4
			5

**Engineering  
Grids**

S	W	M
H	E	A
I	A	E
E	P	U
L	O	V
D	N	R
S	S	

			1
			2
			3
			4
			5

	Turn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Warp Speed									
Sensor Status									
Warp Engine-1	13								
Warp Engine-2	13								
Impulse	12								
Superstructure	22								
Crew	320								
Total Power Available									
Power to Movement									
MOVEMENT POINTS									
Power to Shields									
Power to Weapons									
P H A S E R	Chart:N Power: 0-3 +2(1-7) +1(8-13)	F  F  P  S							
T O R	Chart:R Arm: 1 Damage: 16	F  F							

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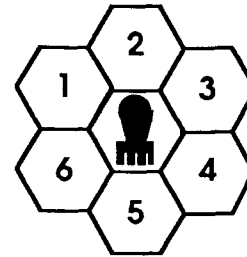
PHASE 3 PHASE 2 PHASE 1 PTS. AVAIL.	TURN #5 SHIELDS						TURN #6 SHIELDS						TURN #7 SHIELDS						TURN #8 SHIELDS					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

## A-401 Class I Assault Boat

Captain's Skill Rating: \_\_\_\_\_ Crew Skill Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Shield Ratio - 1/1 Maximun Shield Power - 14

Stress Columns: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Damage Chart: C



5th Hit- Out

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

1	2	3

4	5	6

S	W	M	
H	A	A	
I	P	N	
E	O	E	
L	V	U	
D	E	O	
S	R	R	
			1
			2
			3
			4
			5

Turn		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sensor Status									
Impulse Engine-1		3							
Impulse Engine-2		3							
Impulse Engine-3		3							
Impulse Engine-4		3							
Superstructure		2							
Crew		2							
Total Power Available									
Power to Movement									
MOVEMENT POINTS									
Power to Shields									
Power to Weapons									
P H A S E R	F								
	Chart: F								
	Power: F								
	0-2								
	F								

[illegible]

	TURN #3 SHIELDS						TURN #4 SHIELDS					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
PHASE 3												
PHASE 2												
PHASE 1												
PTS. AVAIL.												

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# STAR WARS Imperial Scooter Bike

ERIC KRISTIANSEN

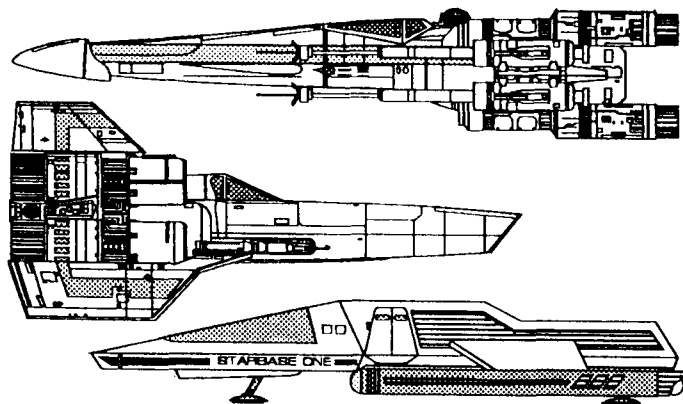
The Imperial Scooter is used by Imperial forces in urban areas where its compact size allows it a maneuverability that is not possible with larger bikes. The scooter's main body is the repulsorlift engine. The scooter is flown using its foot controls that are located at the front of the craft which allow the pilot's hands to remain free. The driver's seat rests on top of the repulsorlift. Located on the front of the scooter is the sensor array which is very sensitive but has very

limited range. While lift is provided by the repulsorlift located in the main body, propulsion is provided by one large thruster located on the rear of the scooter. Although mostly an Imperial craft, civilian model scooters can be found in the private sector as personal transportation, light survey craft, etc., due to their nonmilitary role. ■

"Imperial Scooter Bike" is an entry in **Jackill's Guide to Light Attack Craft, Vol. 1**, a fan produced publication by Eric Kristiansen, and is presented here courtesy of Eric Kristiansen.

## JACKILL'S GUIDE TO LIGHT ATTACK CRAFT

Volume 1



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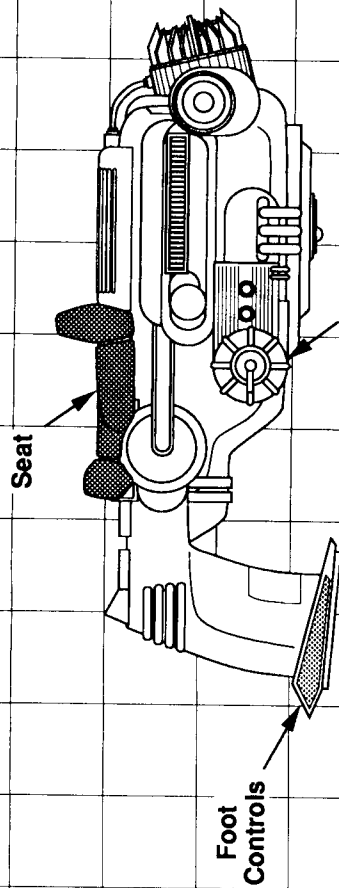
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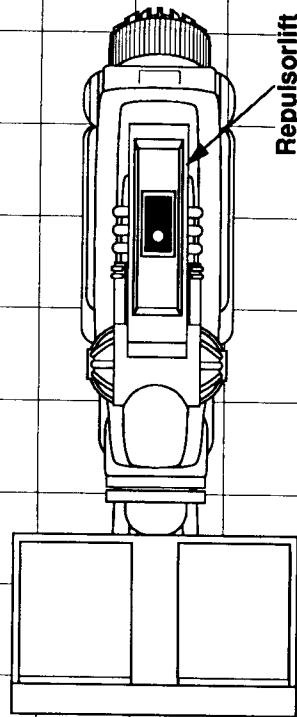
# SCOOTER

GENERAL ISSUE

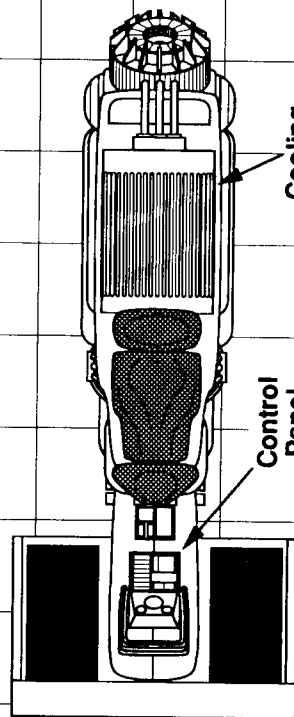
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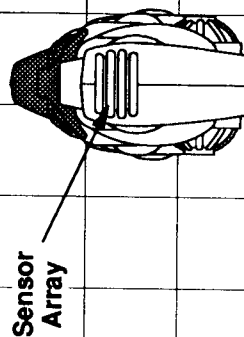
**SIDE VIEW**



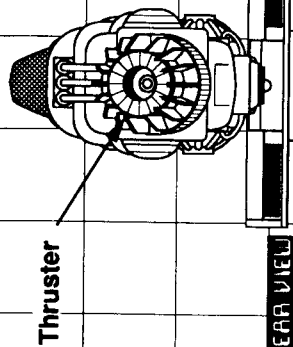
**BOTTOM VIEW**



**TOP VIEW**



**FRONT VIEW**



**REAR VIEW**

## SCOOTER

Craft: Imperial Scooter

Crew: 1

Passengers: None

Cargo Capacity: 2 kilograms (personal gear)

Speed Code: [2D]

Maneuverability: [2D]

Body Strength: [1D]

Weapons: None

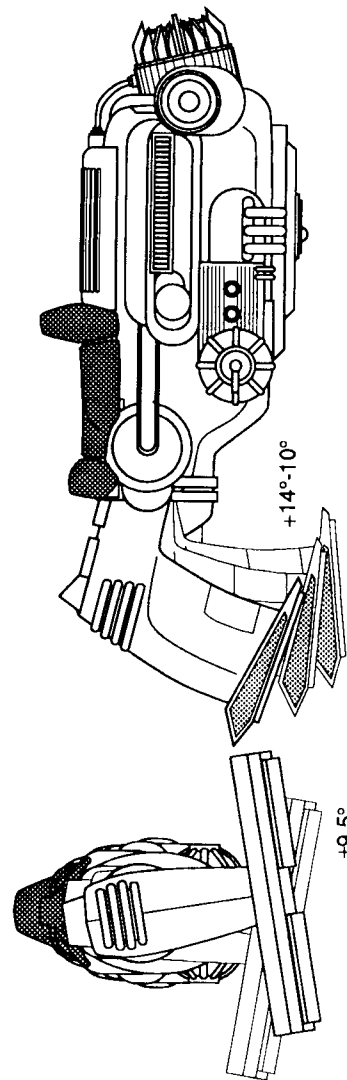
Flight Ceiling: 3 meters

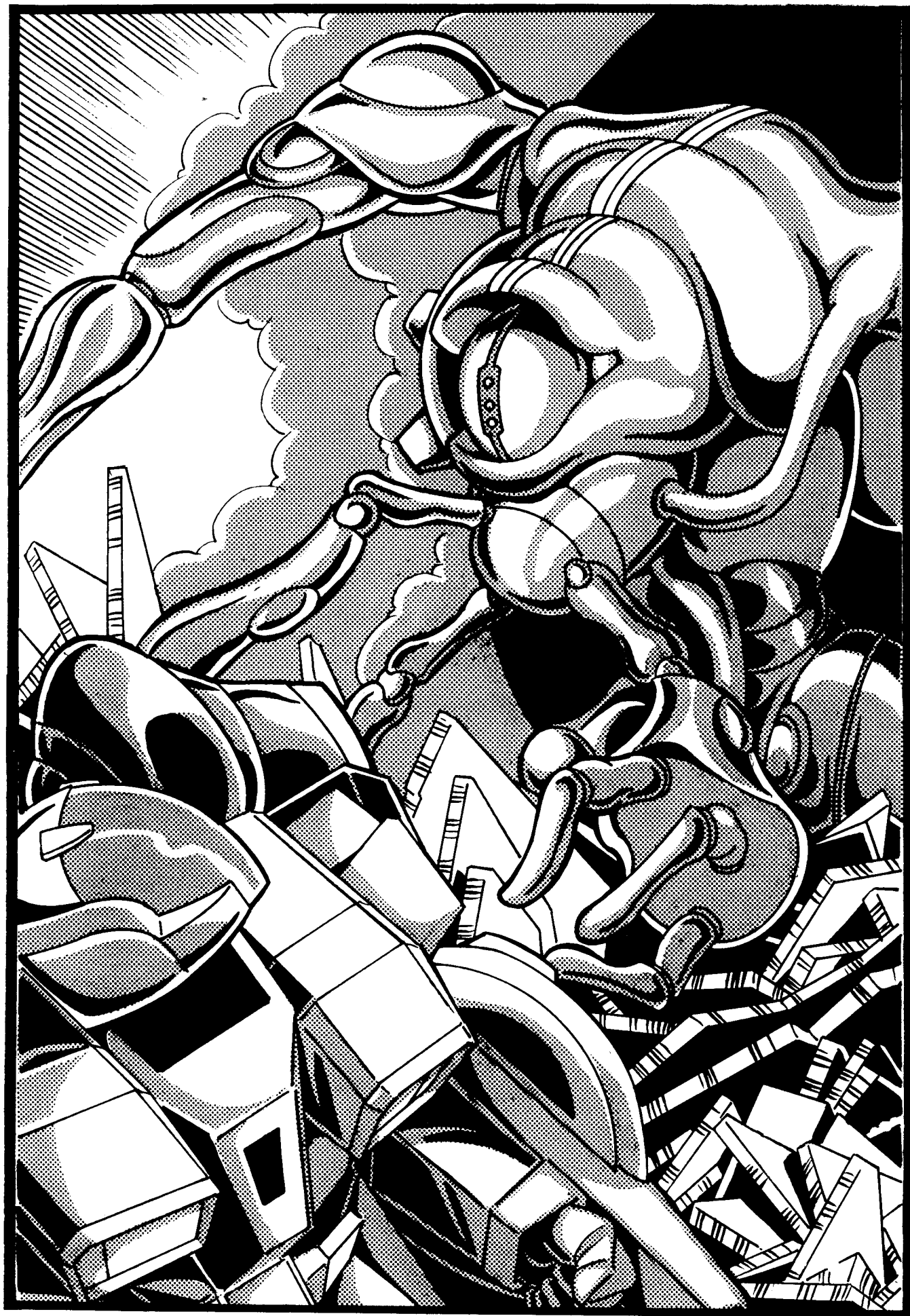
Length: 1.93m

Width: 0.77m

Height: 0.77m

## FOOT CONTROLS





## PROLOGUE

It must be sometime near dusk, Dale mused as he brought the AAT-40 to a smooth halt. Gazing ponderously at his chrono-com, his weary eyes slowly responded and began to translate the tiny numeric hieroglyphics into recognizable characters: 18:30, it read. Geez, he thought, this makes for at least fourteen hours of driving. By the time we get back, it will be well after dark; assuming that I can remember the way out.

Scanning the large cavernous walls above him, he pondered once more who could possibly have been the architect of such expansive tunnels? The Robotech Masters? The Invid? Or could it have been somebody else... And where can they all possibly lead?

This had been Dale's fifth day of reconnaissance since he had discovered the tunnels one week ago. The discovery itself proved to be less climactic among the archaeological board than he had first thought it would be. But now, he was sure that his discovery was of some great import. It was obvious by the end of the second day that the tunnels were not a naturally occurring phenomenon and that their course must have been forged by some great intelligence. But for what reason?

Frustrated by the unpenetrable mystery and the gloomy darkness of the caverns, Dale pounded on the sealed armored compartment to his right, the gleam in his eyes reflecting the prank he was spinning. "Sam! Wake up! Wake up! It's the Zentraedi! It's the Robotech Masters! WAKE UP, MAN! We've gotta get outta here!"

With a bedazzled scream and a flash of laser light from "The Earl" rapid fire laser, Sam awoke in a fright. The wild burst shot from the AAT and detonated above and to the right of the vehicle sending rocks and debris in every

# Aubrey Forest Melchert Trouble on DM-738 Robotech II: The Sentinals

direction. The cavern walls began their ponderous collapse. Dale could not believe his eyes: his simple prank was to spell the end of his discovery, not to mention his very life! Throwing the AAT in reverse, Dale brought the transport around, but that was all there was time for; glancing up, Dale saw the ceiling giving way for hundreds of feet in all directions. Bearing down in his seat, he prepared for the pressing collapse. It wasn't long in coming. In seconds the transport was completely engulfed. A single boulder the size of the transport struck the driver's side, compressing the roll bar against Dale's chest, crushing his ribs and pinning his arms to his side. The last sensations Dale experienced were that of the floor giving away and a long descent into darkness.

## INTRODUCTION

DM-738 is a Earth-type world lying on the fringe of Quadrant Alpha-Vega VII. Nearly as large as the Earth, the planet supports a cool climate (the average temperature along the equator is 55 degrees F.) and is enveloped by a thin blanket of atmosphere. Evidence shows that in the planet's recent history (some 400,000 years ago) the planet was much warmer and was possessed of a much thicker covering of atmosphere. Initially surveyed by a Carbonarian exploration vessel some ten

years ago, evidence was shown that the planet was once inhabited by intelligent life forms. Now the planet is home to a small REF scientific outpost dedicated to the excavation, recovery, and analysis of the alien artifacts purported to exist beneath the planet's surface. To date, no significant discoveries have been made.

## Outpost Statistics:

**Name:** DM-738 Research Post Sierra-VII (Rilley's Canyon)

**Condition:** Indego — potential alien aggression unlikely

**Outpost Complement:** One-quarter standard REF Outpost military complement and mecha (approx. 24 troops). 72 non-military personnel including 20 families respectively. 96 total personnel.

**Outpost Layout:** Consult REF Field Guide NO: 11-86 pp. 46-47 for layout and equipment.

**Current Status:** Unknown. All communications with DM-738 lost since TD 13.01.24 (Terran Date January 13, 2024, two weeks ago).

## Action Advised:

Reroute the SFC Command Carrier *Triumphant* to DM-738 and send one *Horizont* dropship with an investigation team to determine the outposts's current condition; offer assistance if necessary and take whatever action is deemed necessary by the mission commander to insure the security of the outpost and its members.

## THE ADVENTURE

**Note:** This information will not immediately be known by the investigation party (the PCs), but will be revealed through the process of their investigation.

Dale Barker and his partner Sam Preston were in the process of charting a series of tunnels and catacombs which wind through the length of the Dallas Valley some twenty miles north

of Riley's Canyon, Research Post Sierra IX. Barker's research into the planet's paleontology indicated that the formation of both the Dallas Valley and Riley's Canyon was not a result of natural causes, but rather a result of some sort of extraterrestrial bombardment; the nature of that bombardment was yet to be determined. During Barker's last exploration into the Dallas Valley, tunnel R-36, both he and his partner disappeared; presumably the result of some sort of tectonic collapse within the cavern. Research into the Barker Hypothesis was discontinued on 15.12.23, three weeks after their disappearance. On 13.01.24, Barker returned, alone and on foot. From this time forward, all communication with Sierra IX was lost.

Barker miraculously survived the cavern's collapse, although his partner did not. Unable to move, Barker was eventually discovered by an inorganic Crann patrol and removed from the wreckage. Apparently, the collapse of the cavern above awakened the invid brain slumbering in the chambers deep beneath the surface of the Dallas Valley. Taken to the brain, Barker was interrogated, experimented upon and given an entire main body replacement (p. 106, **Robotech Book V: Invid Invasion**). A slave to the invid, Barker was sent to herald the coming destruction of the outpost and ensure that no communication of the hive's existence would be relayed to REF headquarters.

## Planetary History:

During the height of the conflict between the Robotech Masters and the Invid, this world represented an invid stronghold within this quadrant of space. However, during a Zentraedi assault on the planet, the invid were crushed and the planet was nearly destroyed. The hive which was happened upon by Barker and Preston is the last surviving outpost on the planet. During the assault on the planet, the hive was nearly destroyed. In what could only be called a "possum play" by the invid brain, the hive ceased all functions and played dead. During the fatal tunnel collapse and Barker's advent into the lower remaining levels

of the hive, the 400,000 year slumber of the invid brain was ended. Seeing the similarities between Barker and what the invid brain knew to be the Robotech Masters' physiology, the brain assumed that the Robotech Masters had taken possession of the small world and began preparations to lay a campaign to retake the planet.

## Hive Resources:

All that remains of the hive are the last three levels (L5-L7). The hive itself is of dome construction (Ibid, pp.91-93).

**Level Five** has been converted to a buffer level, and only has Hellcats and Odeon guarding the entrance, two "Cats" to one Odeon guard (1d6 guards may be present).

**Level Six** is of type "D" construction. This is the only remaining "living" invid within the hive except for level seven, and these invid may be sent out on missions to stop the investigation team during the team's campaign to destroy the hive. In addition to the enforcer guards on level six there are the following invid inorganics: 12 Hellcats, 04 Odeon, 02 Scrims, 01 Crann.

**Level Seven** is of type "B" construction. There are 2d8 stage two invid in stasis awaiting entry into invid trooper mecha. These invid are reserved for the defense of the hive.

## REF Team Resources

The team will be dropped at the edge of the solar system, near the eighth and farthest out planet. The journey to DM-738 and Sierra VII will take about 23 hours. From this point on, the team will be on their own, as the SFC *Triumphant* will fold space to continue with their pre-planned scheduled route and will not return to pick up the team for 17 days; and any emergency communiques will take at least that long to be responded to after they are received.

The *Horizant* DTTS-12 will carry the usual Legios (Alpha/Beta combination) and the 12 Cyclone Riders (of which the PCs may be a part). The transport bunkers will be empty and used only in case an emergency evacuation of the outpost personnel and equipment is

deemed necessary. For additional information pertaining to the DTTS-12, see **Robotech II: Sentinals**, pp. 94-97.

Additional crew of a Bio-Maintenance Engineer or Field Scientist may be added at the expense of one or more of the Cyclone Riders.

Sierra IV station has undergone selective devastation. 90 percent of all personnel have been killed. 10 percent are unaccounted for. All mecha bearing a protoculture power source have been destroyed. However, there is sufficient equipment available to repair the mecha with the expertise of a skilled bio-maintenance engineer.

Dale Barker is the only remaining survivor at the base. Barker is not an asset, at least not one easily exploited, and may serve as a spy for the invid brain, as well as a disruptive force among the party, if allowed to remain with the party. It should be stressed that Barker is completely and hopelessly a pawn of the invid brain, and as such, not responsible for his actions. This may be important where principled or scrupulous characters are concerned, as that Barker, however corrupt now, is still an innocent.

## Execution of the Adventure

How the team discovers the outpost, the conditions, etc., are left to the creative genius of the referee. The basic flow of the encounters will include: recon of the base and surrounding area, encountering Barker, going through the records of the base, retracing Barker's steps, encountering the invid inorganics, saving potential invid prisoners (the missing 10 percent) and destroying the hive. The detail, flavor, and color must be generated by the referee, based upon the needs and desires of the players. An element or image which may prove of some help is that created by the movie "Aliens," and bringing elements of that story to bear with regard to the party and the invid may prove very rewarding.

That's about all, so have fun and get out there and stomp suit! ■

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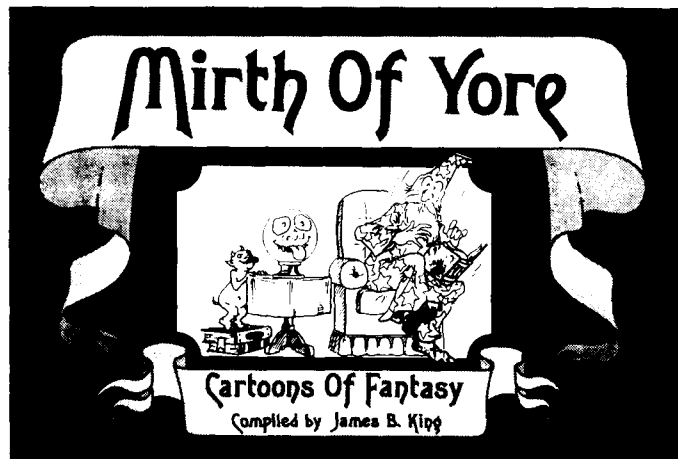
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## RATINGS

4 = Excellent    3 = Good  
2 = Fair    1 = Poor

## WarpWorld

200 page rule book. \$21.95.

*Game Design:* Greg Porter. *Cover and Interior Art:* Darrel Midgett.

*Publisher:* Blacksburg Tactical Research Center, 1925 Airy Circle, Richmond VA 23233.

### Background

*WarpWorld* is a RPG set in a post-holocaust North America. A global nuclear war occurred on September 16, 2016. As people struggled to survive, things changed; mutated, rather. It is now the year 2312, roughly 300 years after the big blast. Culture slid backwards and then began to climb out of the hole left by the nuclear exchange that devastated the world as we know it. Magic is possible by some people and any high technology still around is considered valuable treasure.

### Game Mechanics

*WarpWorld* is the third in a series of RPGs using the same basic game mechanics, following *Time Lords*, which involved time and dimension travel, and *SpaceTime*, which detailed space travel, high tech, and standard SF adventures, all written by Greg Porter and published by BTRC.

*WarpWorld* is based on the D20 and each attribute point gives roughly a 5% chance of succeeding in using that attribute. Each player is given a basic 300 Attribute Points and 600 Skill Points to purchase attributes and skills. But that is for a character at age 16. If you want to start at a later age, you would get additional points for development.

There are ten attributes (eleven if you buy Magical Aptitude): Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Will Power, Bravado, Perception, Appearance, Stamina, and Power. There are additional Secondary Attributes such as Speed, Body Points, Reputation, etc.

There are a good number of skills to choose from. Skill levels can be purchased up to a maximum of the appropriate attribute plus your age divided by two and rounded down. However, some skills are rated at either more or less complicated than average and have a Difficulty Rating that perhaps requires you to pay skill development costs at a level higher or lower than the base cost for that skill. There are also skills that are related. If you choose a skill that is closely related to a skill you have already chosen, the closely related skill begins at a level of half that of the first skill.

Merely related skills begin with a level of the appropriate aptitude for that skill plus one.

When developing a character, Advantages and Disadvantages can help to round out characters and make them more interesting. Players can also play a character of a different race: elf, dwarf, ogre, or margo (short monkey-like humanoids).

If you don't have time to develop a character, you can choose one of the already almost completely pre-generated character classes and

flesh it out a bit more. These classes are: Mercenary, Apprentice, Rogue, and Spy.

Magic is a familiar of a different color. There are three different types of magic users: Projectors, Channelers, and Converters, and six different schools of magic to choose from. Spells cost certain amounts of skill points, so a magic user will probably not have many other skills if he is any good at magic.

Any skill use, including combat, that requires a number to be modified by another number will refer to the Universal Modifier Chart or UMC. If someone with a skill of 12 has a -6 modifier, the chart is consulted. Cross-referencing the skill of 12 with the modifier of -6 gives a number of 4. The skill of 12 is now -4 points so the chance of success is now 8, not 12. If the modifier had been a +6, the skill chance would now be 16, instead of 12.

Combat is done using Turns. Each Turn is broken down into 10 Phases (or seconds). Depending on what your Speed rating is, you get to take action during certain phases. You can act during other phases as well, but you act with a penalty. During each Phase, players act in order of their Initiative which is determined by averaging the level of the skill to be used with their Physical or Mental Speed (rounded down).

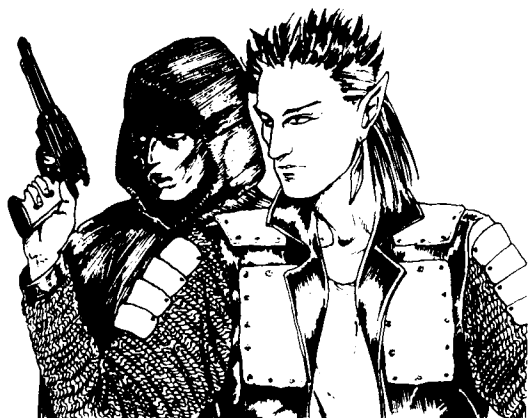
Weapons are rated by Damage Type which determines the percentage of Body damage the character receives. Damage location is randomly selected by the roll of a die and body parts not covered by armor will receive damage in multiples of the base damage, depending on what part was hit (Head x4, Abdomen x2, etc.).

Armor is rated in Armor Value (AV), and Body Points (BP). AV has two ratings (i.e. 7/4). The first number is how much damage can be converted to nonlethal damage. The second number is how much damage will not penetrate the armor. If that piece of armor has 6 Body Points per location and takes 9 points of damage, 2 points will get all the way

through the armor, and the AV is reduced by 1/2 of the fraction of points (rounded down) that got through. 2 out of 6 is 1/3 and half of that is 1/6, so the AV is now 7-1-6/3.



WarpWorld art copr. 1985, 1991 Greg Porter



## What I Liked

The map of North America on the inside cover is a nice touch as is the reduced picture of the Character Record sheet showing which pages to find related information on. Having a Table of Contents as well as an Index is also very nice. Most of the artwork is good.

## What I Didn't Like

It's too complicated. You need a calculator and a degree in mathematics to complete the record sheet. Also, I had to reread parts of the rule book at least four times to get much sense out of it. Many of the headings in the book and all of the headings on the Character Record sheet are set in an Old English font, which makes them difficult to read. Why?

## So...What About the Game?

If you already own and use one or more of the games in this series AND you want to try a post-holocaust game, then you MIGHT want to consider this game. Otherwise, you should think a time or two before you spend your money on this one. I don't think that complexity alone always equals quality. Also, I feel that most of the background ideas in this game have been done elsewhere and perhaps better. This game is definitely not recommended for beginning players or referees. It is put together well and the artwork is good, but *WarpWorld* just doesn't tickle my fancy. Take a look at it in the store. You might decide you like it or can use parts of it somewhere else.

— Glen Allison

## REVIEW IN BRIEF

### WARPWORLD=2.8

Game Complexity: *Very High*

### RULES=2.5

Clarity=2      Realism=3  
Flexibility=3      Playability=2

### DEVELOPMENT=2.9

Background=3  
Technology=3      Scenarios=2.8

### PRODUCTION=3.0

Cover Art=3      Interior Art=3.5  
Layout=3      Editing=3  
Charts=2.5      Record Forms=3

## Guardians

### The Game of Heroic High Adventure

128 page rulebook. \$9.95.

*Creative Director:* Gideon. *Executive Editor:* James Perham. *Cover Artist:* Andy Dimmit. *Interior Artists:* Gideon, Andy Dimmit, Kevin Van Hook, Christina Wald, Kurt Metz.

*Publisher:* StarChilde Publications, P.O. Box 255, New Lenox IL 60451.

## Background

In *Guardians*, players take the part of characters with super powers and skills whose job is to save the block, neighborhood, suburb, city, state, country, planet, universe, etc., from the evil alien invaders, super bad guys, soldiers from (insert country of your choice), city gang, local street punks, etc. The first Guardian was Ariel, daughter of King Arthur. Over the centuries, others have swelled the ranks of the Guardians to protect the downtrodden. You are the next to join. You will now be fighting by the side Mr. Incredible, Pink Flamingo, Jack Adams, Silicon Kid, The Iron Warrior, MistMaster, Squirt, and InflatoMan.

## Game Mechanics

Creating a character is fairly simple but somewhat complex because of all the possible combinations of super powers, skills, and disadvantages available. You start by choosing an origin for your character such as Inherited Powers or Physical Transformation. Then you decide on a motivation that drives your character to do what he/she does, such as Emotional Dependency or Sense of Duty. Once those decisions are made, you select a character class from a list including Guardian, Vigilante, and Freelancer.

## What I Liked

There are several things I like about *Guardians*. There is comic book artwork on just about every page and most of it is very good. Also, scattered throughout the book is the history of the Guardians, done in comic book format and totalling 17 pages. The game examples are well done and have a sense of humor about them. There are enough skills, powers, and disadvantages listed to flesh out a decent character. And I liked the introductory adventure. It includes a clear synopsis, five well-developed player characters, three nasty bad guys, an evil Mastermind and a few surprises that I'll leave for you to find out for yourself. Lastly, the price is right.

## What I Didn't Like

It seems to me that the history of the Guardians, spread out across the entire book, broke the continuity of the rules sections and made it a little harder to find what you were looking for. And at least one page number was incorrect in the Table of Contents. The type-size of the text providing details on the PCs and NPCs in the adventure is smaller, making it a bit harder to read. Also, the Player Record sheet is a little too small to put much detail on it, but this is because of the smaller physical size of the book.

## So, What About the Game?

I'll admit that I approached this game for a review with a preformed opinion. I don't usually like superhero games because it is too easy for the referee to lose control of the very powerful PCs and before long, everything becomes boring. It requires a good referee to keep everything in balance, a task that is not easy for some people. This game suffers from this possibility just like all the others of this genre. But it still left me with a feeling that I wanted to try it anyway. It was not too simple or too complicated, so that players could create a character without a great deal of trouble but each character would have enough detail to make him interesting to play.

If you've thought about playing a superhero game, this just might be the one you're looking for. It doesn't cost much so anyone can afford it (unlike some of these games). And it has enough detail so that it is not ambiguous and doesn't require the referee to create half the game system (again, unlike some of these games). Take a look at this one. It has the potential to be an interesting and enjoyable game.

— Glen Allison

## REVIEW IN BRIEF

### GUARDIANS=3.0

Game Complexity: *Moderate*

### RULES=3.1

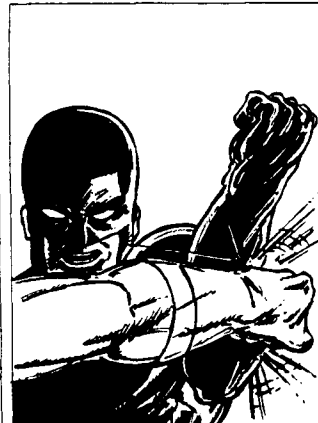
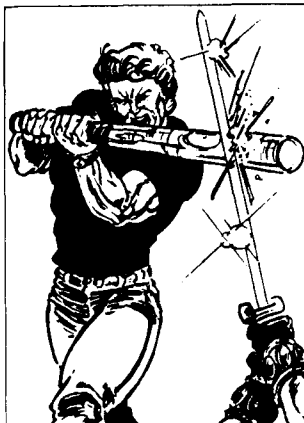
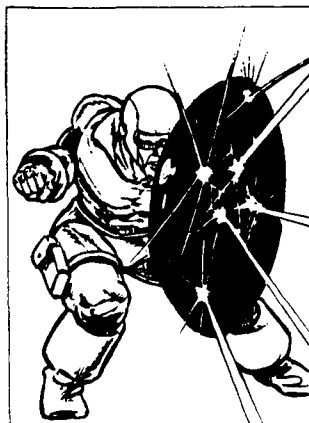
Clarity=3      Realism=3  
Flexibility=3.5      Playability=3

### DEVELOPMENT=3.0

Background=3  
Technology=3      Scenarios=3

### PRODUCTION=2.9

Cover Art=3      Interior Art=3.5  
Layout=2.5      Editing=3  
Charts=N/A      Record Forms=2.5





## CORPS

### The Global Conspiracy Role-Playing Game

52 page booklet. \$8.95.

*Game Design:* Greg Porter. *Back Cover Artist:* Darrell Midgette. *Interior Computer Graphics:* Greg Porter.

*Publisher:* Blackburg Tactical Research Center, 1925 Airy Circle, Richmond VA 23233.

"For centuries, rumors have flourished that the history of the world has been influenced overtly or covertly by a number of powerful individuals or secretive groups, through manipulation, fear, violence or economics."

As this first paragraph of the Background section suggests, *Corps* presents a world that is heavily influenced—or, to some degree, controlled—by powerful groups and organizations that seek, in most cases, to dominate the world. As the Background states, "Plots and counterplots are afoot, and the world situation is becoming increasingly chaotic as these long-hidden groups become increasingly open in their activities."

Player Characters in *Corps* know of, or at least suspect, the existence of at least one of these hidden groups, and have become players in the shadowy wars and activities that remain hidden from the world at large.

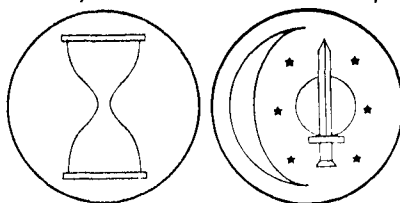
The *Corps* Introduction and Background sections thoroughly intrigued me. After reading just these one and a quarter pages, I was ready to play this game! Of course, there was still most of a book to read and a game system to learn.

A Player Character is created by spending an Attribute Pool of points to generate six attributes, and spending a Skill Pool to acquire skills. Additional attribute points can be acquired by taking disadvantages, such as enemies or a physical limitation (it may be necessary to take disadvantages to get attribute levels that the player can be satisfied with). Attribute points can be spent to purchase advantages as well. Players who enjoy using advantages/disadvantages may request that more be added to the list, as the selection is quite limited. The skill list is equitable to the needs of the subject matter. More skills can be added as desired, as there are no definitions

for those included anyway (I'm not suggesting this is bad. Though it is standard to include skill definitions, most skills are self-descriptive, such as Pistol or Grenade. Skills such as Equestrian Sports or Electronic Countermeasures would require some research to properly apply in game play anyway). The skills include a list of mutant (paranormal) powers that can be used at the referee's option. The two-page character record sheet includes a walloping amount of information. When playing other games I usually end up keeping a lot of this data on other sheets of paper. With *Corps* you won't have to do that. Okay, the character sheet is packed. But the data is well organized.

The goal of the *Corps* game designer was to create a game requiring few dice rolls. When using skills, a character has a 110% chance of success when using a skill against a task level that is less than or equal to their level of competence. Only when the difficulty is greater than the skill or attribute level is a 10-sided die used. Optional rules help keep PCs from automatically getting hit and provide for the possibility of disaster even when a skill use should automatically succeed (there's no argument that people can really screw things up—even simple tasks).

The *Corps* rules are concise and uncomplicated,



Corps art copr. 1990 Greg Porter

yet cover, in my opinion, all that needs to be covered (for which I am grateful—I just might run a *Corps* campaign).

A two-page timeline lists actual historical occurrences and includes the "secret history" of these events. I very much enjoyed these entries, but there simply were not enough to appease me—I wanted much more!

Sixteen organizations and types of organizations are presented and profiled, providing players and referees with plenty of allies and, much more frequently, dangerous enemies. My personal choice, should I choose to run a *Corps* campaign, would be to drop some of the groups and concentrate on an increased threat from the others.

An introductory adventure, "Chinese Puzzle," is, though quite short (all of two pages), sufficient to introduce players to the game background—especially because it leaves an unsolved mystery!

*Corps* is a rather small package at only 52 pages, but, believe it or not, actually presents a fairly complete and usable RPG system. But I do have some complaints. Finding data is going to be more difficult than with most games because chapter headings are in only 12-point text. Okay, the running headlines along the top of the pages will guide you to the data you need, so maybe this isn't much of a complaint. But, with the exception of chapter and organizations icons, there are no illustrations in this book. None! The book would be much improved with a few illos. If the book had been stretched to a standard 56 pages, this would have allowed sixteen quarter-page or eight half-page illos. Perfect!

If you enjoy espionage RPGs, *Corps* would make a nice addition to your game collection

because of its conspiracy twist. I recommend it even though it has no artwork—something I myself can't get enough of. This is because it's a contemporary game. If you want pictures they're easy enough to find in other sources.

*Corps* is an intriguing game. So go ahead, pick it up, take a look at it. But look around first, make sure you're not being watched. If you are and you openly buy *Corps*, they'll find out who you are. They'll find out where you live. And they'll know that you know about them. You may never be heard from again...

—James B. King

## CORPS Technology 1991

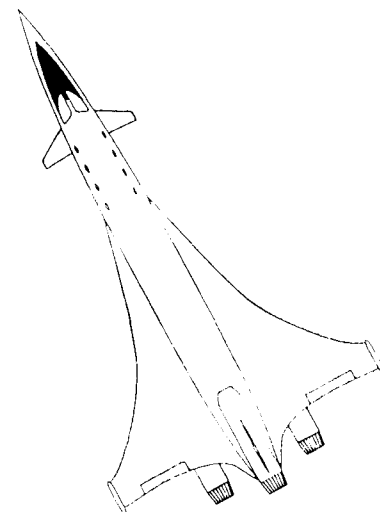
28 page booklet (*Corps*). \$5.95.

*Design:* Greg Porter. *Back Cover Artist:* Darrell Midgette. *Interior Computer Graphics:* Greg Porter.

*Publisher:* Blackburg Tactical Research Center, 1925 Airy Circle, Richmond VA 23233.

This *Corps* sourcebook presents an adventurer's catalog of all kinds of nifty items (even Q would drool over a few of these things). All items are rated on a scale ranging from being available to civilians, to available to military and government forces only, to military technology theoretically possible (a total of seven ratings in all). Included are standard items such as types of ammo, the HMMWV (Hummer), elite foreign cars, and theoreticals such as powered armor and a super-secret replacement for the SR-71 (and who's to say whether or not prototypes of such items have actually been developed).

It is obvious that the author has done his homework; putting together a sourcebook of contemporary items would require lots of research. The book also includes many illustrations—diagrams actually—all giving a top view, even for cars and motorcycles, which is not a bad thing. If the referee wanted to go to the effort, photocopies could be made to scale and used with miniatures—not that I'm suggesting that you



Corps Technology art 1991 copr. 1991 Greg Porter

### REVIEW IN BRIEF

#### CORPS=3.0

Game Complexity: *Moderate*

#### RULES=2.9

Clarity=3.5      Realism=2.5  
Flexibility=2.5      Playability=3

#### DEVELOPMENT=3.3

Background=3.5  
Technology=3.5      Scenarios=3

#### PRODUCTION=2.8

Cover Art=2.5      Interior Art=1  
Layout=2.5      Editing=4  
Charts=3.5      Record Forms=3.5



ignore copyright laws...

**Corps Technology 1991** is a very useful addition to the *Corps* rulebook, as the equipment list in the game is, while probably adequate to begin play, lacking for extended play. But, with this book... Hey, want a laser communicator? An explosive ordnance disposal robot? A radio detonator jammer? How about an anti-riot vehicle? Or even a business supersonic passenger jet? If you're playing any espionage RPG, I would recommend owning this book. Almost everybody likes toys, regardless of what contemporary RPG they're playing.

— James B. King

## Darktek

104 page book (*Dark Conspiracy*). \$12.

*Design:* Charles E. Gannon. *Development:* Lester W. Smith. *Cover Artist:* John Zeleznik. *Interior Artists:* Steve Bryant, Paul Daly, Elizabeth T. Danforth, LaMont Fullerton, Rick Harris, David Martin, Ellisa Martin, David O. Miller. *Interior Color:* Grant Goleash.

*Publisher:* GDW Games, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646.

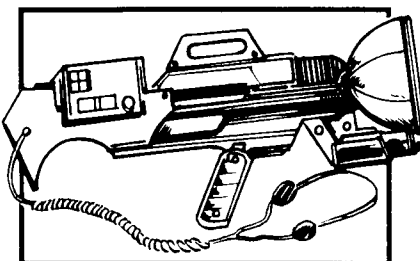
**Darktek** is the first sourcebook for *Dark Conspiracy*. It is, appropriately, filled with new gadgets, but happily the gadgets are equally split between new stuff for the beleaguered humans and new nastiness for the awful creepies.

The book is split into sections explaining the nature and ugly limitations of the alien Darktek, biological devices (mostly alien), electronic devices (mostly human), weapons, vehicles and robots (half human, half alien), miscellaneous equipment and consumer goods (mostly human). Each gadget has its own *Twilight 2000*-style listing, with all necessary game mechanics and statistics. Most of the items have some illustration



to show players and referees what they look like.

**Darktek** was necessary. There wasn't enough room in *Dark Conspiracy* to detail even a fraction of the devices available. Now there is a sourcebook filled with new stuff, ranging from definitely useful (like the S&W 12-ga. handcannon shot-



gun-pistol) to the interesting background (consumer goods).

What more can I say about an equipment book? I can compliment the exquisite and striking front cover illustration; beautifully grotesque, and extremely well-done. And the color plates in the interior are nice, too.

**Darktek** is a must for *Dark Conspiracy* referees. Get this and **Infantry Weapons of the World** and you're set. Furthermore, the price is right; other companies would charge a bundle just for the color illustrations.

— Craig Sheeley

## Heart of Darkness

72 page adventure (*Dark Conspiracy*). \$10.

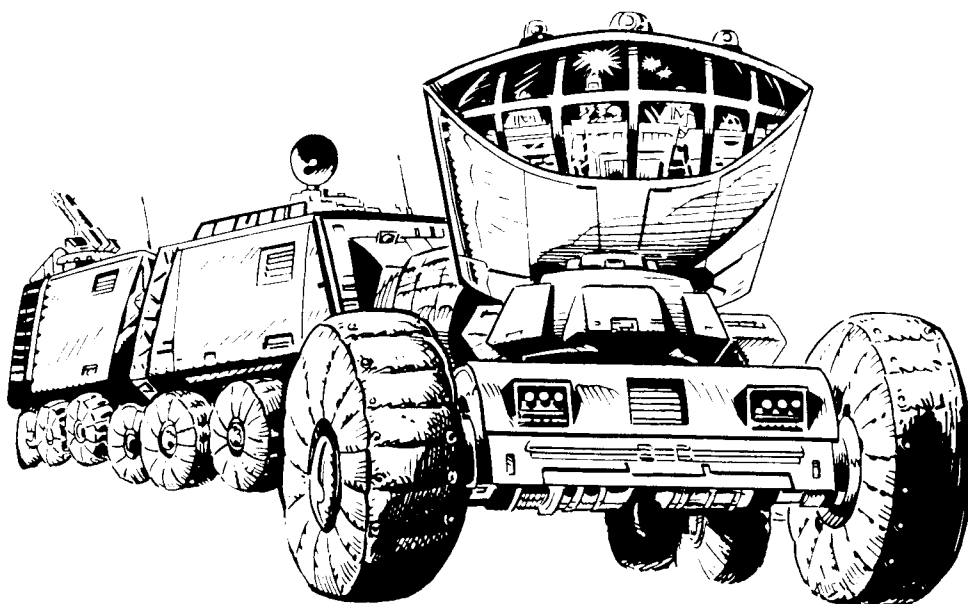
*Design:* Creede and Sharleen Lombard. *Development:* Lester Smith. *Cover Artist:* Dell Harris. *Interior Artists:* Janet Aulisio, Earl Geier, Dell Harris, Rick Harris, Kirk Wescom.

*Publisher:* GDW Games, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646.

**Heart of Darkness** is the first adventure module for *Dark Conspiracy*. It is a globe-trotting, searching mystery, of the sort that reminds one of a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure—it has the sort of flavor that tempts referees to have the PCs encounter Indiana Jones along the way.

The PCs are looking for a rock—a single opal with a long, nasty history. Unfortunately for the characters, other people are looking for the rock, too. And if they find it and put it to use, the situation gets critical, very quickly. The opal, the Heart of Darkness, is the focal point of an ancient cult and holds more secrets than are revealed in its history.

I cannot reveal more about the adventure's plot without giving it away. **Heart of Darkness** does have some nice features to it, though. For instance, a new monster-hunting organization is profiled, the Brothers of Ahmed. Admitted, their whole organization exists to stop the Heart of Darkness from bringing back the Dark Lady, but after the adventure the Brothers could be easily persuaded to turn their talents to dealing with



Darktek art copr. 1991 GDW, Inc.



Heart of Darkness art copr. 1991 GDW, Inc.

other threats. I did like the ultimately creepy device of imprisoning souls in opals; it's a pity that there were no game mechanics for the process.

Overall, I liked the module. The encounters across the world are a bit episodic, but a competent referee can take them out of sequence without much trouble. Besides, each encounter is sort of a short adventure in itself, and splits up nicely for multi-session play. The clues aren't too difficult to find or understand, although the PCs may have some trouble getting the Big Picture—the background information provided to the referee explains exactly what's going on, and the Brothers of Ahmed are a good way to convey that information to confused monster hunters.

Perhaps my favorite feature of the module concerns the lack of monsters to be found. *Dark Conspiracy* is so full of ugly critters lurching from the fog, dripping slime and saliva, that there's a great temptation to overpopulate the game with them (and it's getting worse with the upcoming *Dark Races* supplement). In this adventure, the enemies aren't preternatural monsters, they're



mere humans. Humans with the same (or better) empathic abilities and hardware available to the PCs (oops—they're pointing guns at us. Can they do that?) I'm happy to find some other authors who agree with my assessment that the most deadly adversary any horror game can invent is humanity.

What's not to like about this adventure? Well, I found that there seems to be a blithe assumption that the PCs will be semi-professional monster hunters, with the resources to pick up their lives and go globe-trotting in search of the Heart. Referees are going to have to arrange an excuse for the characters to do this.

Heart of Darkness is a fairly good first adventure. Certainly the public thinks so; the first print run is almost sold out. Perhaps some people will be disappointed with the lack of creepy-crawlies oozing out from under the wood-work, or the lack of high-powered, ammo-wasting combat. I applaud the work's toned down, novel-style approach (more background than combat—hooray!) as an excellent example of *Dark Conspiracy*'s best feature: its flexibility.

— Craig Sheeley

## Nautical & Aviation Handbook

104 page book (*Twilight: 2000* and related games). \$12.

*Designer:* Loren K. Wiseman. *Cover Artist:* Grant Goleash. *Interior Artists:* Tim Bradstreet, Amy Doublet, LaMont Fullerton, Grant Goleash, Kirk Wescom.

*Publisher:* GDW Games, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646.

The **Nautical and Aviation Handbook** is something Frank Chadwick assumed would never be necessary in the fuel-poor world of *Twilight: 2000*. Players, of course, thought differently—aircraft are so much a part of every military today that picturing a military situation without them is alien to us. And when *Merc: 2000* was introduced, outlining a world where fuel is still available, the need for an aircraft supplement became paramount.

This supplement's title is really somewhat misleading. There are eight, count 'em eight, nautical craft in this book. When compared to the 30 airplanes and 34 helicopters, that's not very much. The book should have been titled the *Aviation Handbook* (and a few boats). The boats presented cover a wide range of sizes, from an inflatable dinghy and an over-armed motorboat to a full-size patrol craft that has a 76mm Oto-Malera, a pair of 30mms and a helicopter pad. There are no further rules for watercraft, as all the movement and combat rules are already in the main book.

Where the handbook really shines is in the air. There are detailed rules on take-offs and landings, on air-to-air, air-to-ground, and surface-to-air combat, on bombs, guns, missiles, and aerial maneuvering—all the things that make aircraft fun. The rules are fairly easy to understand and implement in a *Twilight: 2000* game—watch it! Anything with wings rumbling overhead is cause to seek cover; bombs aren't real picky about who they blow up.

The bulk of the handbook is filled with single-page vehicle descriptions and charts, similar to any of the *Twilight: 2000* vehicle guides. Aircraft from several nationalities are covered, although I'd have been happier with some updated aircraft (no YF-117 here, folks—and no Soviet designs past the Frogfoot!). The aircraft included in this supplement are ground-attack aircraft only; no Air Superiority (cheap plug for an excellent game) aircraft here! And there are eggbeaters as far as the eye can see, including some designs that shouldn't have been included, for they are nearing the end of their operational lifespans today (the Choctaw, the Chinook).

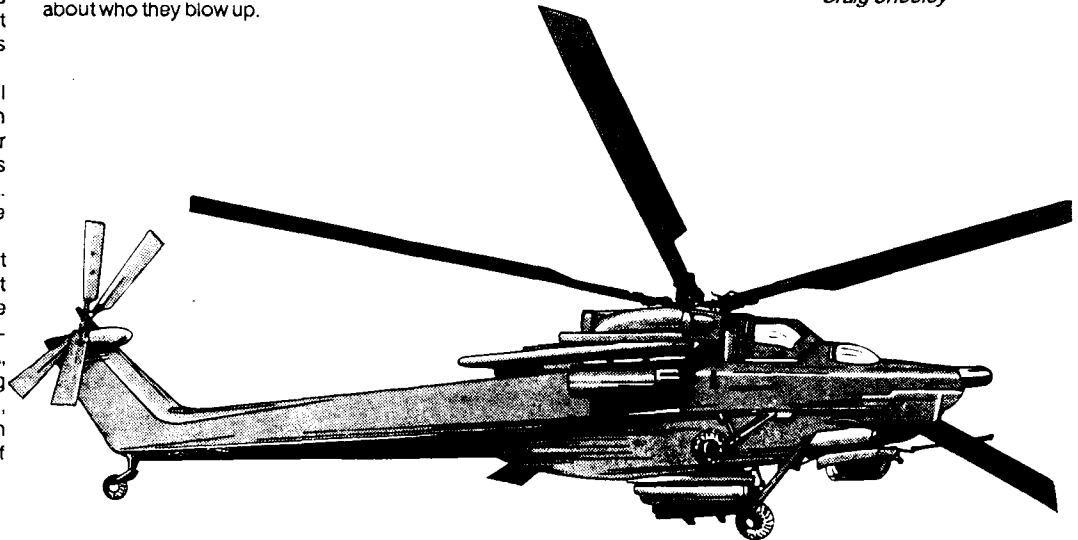
(Hint to those who want to soar at high altitudes and have missile fights: Buy a copy of *Air Superiority* and play out the battles there. Leave the *Twilight: 2000* system briefly and come back to it when you near the ground—the rules in this handbook are much easier to use and just as accurate as the rules from *Air Strike*. Besides, with AS you can add variables, like F-15s against flying saucers in *Dark Conspiracy*!)

In all, a fairly standard *Twilight: 2000* vehicle supplement. I tend to wonder about some of the prices—the Napco Raider, a motorboat with three tripod mounts, costs your *Merc: 2000* character \$750,000, but the 38-meter, full-sized SAR-38 German reconnaissance boat (small ship with a 12-man crew, a 76mm repeating cannon, twin 30mms and a helicopter pad) costs a mere \$275,000. There's one for Murphy's Rules!

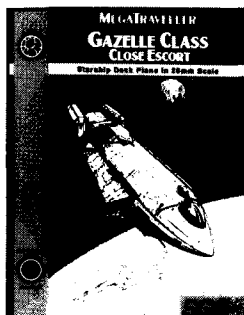
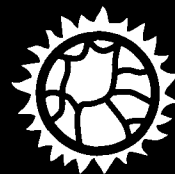
And how do you buy SAMs? No telling! The only surface-to-air missile that even has a price or any stats (other than combat statistics) is the ADATS from *Twilight: 2000*. The rest are mentioned, but not detailed. Furthermore, I think Loren made the SAMs too difficult to use—considering that most Third World SAM gunners have minimal training, those missiles have got to be easier to use than the Difficult task rating most of them have. After all, when any terrorist can pick one up, read the instructions (or see someone use it) and be successful, these missiles must be pretty easy to use. The Soviets discovered this in Afghanistan.

If you want to add the aerial element to your *Twilight: 2000* game, get this. *Dark Conspiracy* referees may find it useful, but *Merc: 2000* games absolutely need this.

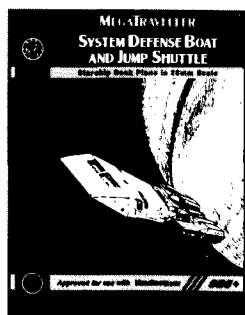
— Craig Sheeley



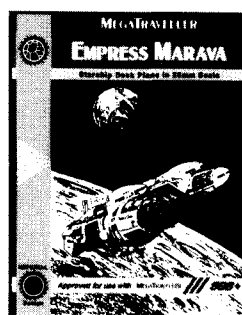
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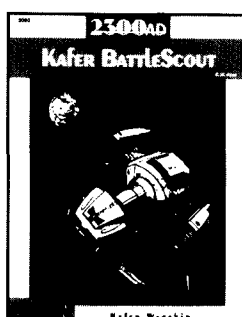
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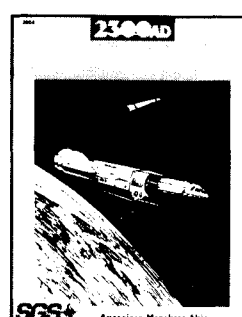
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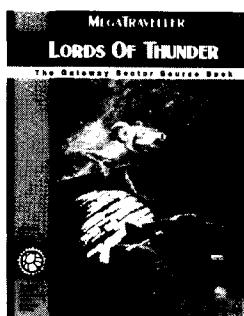
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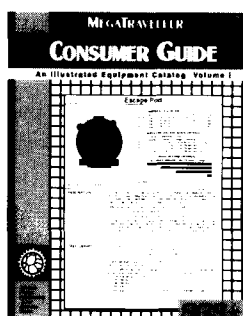
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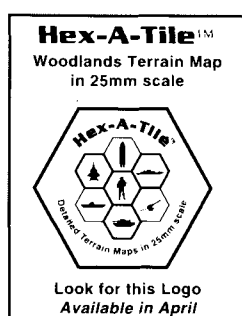
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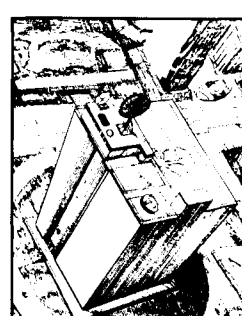
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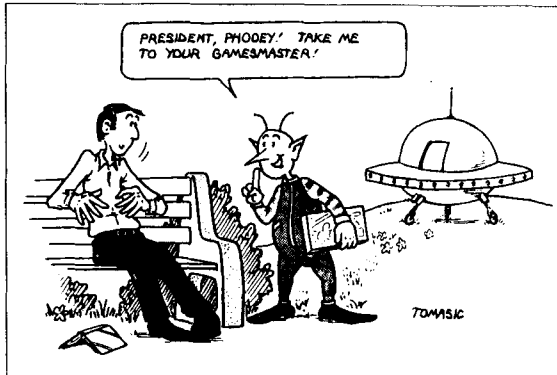


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